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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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India wraps up Olympics with 6 medals but no Gold

With the biggest contingent ever, India hoped to touch the double digit tally this time *PHOTO: PTI*

MEDAL TALLY

COUNTRIES				
US	38	42	43	123
CHINA	40	27	24	90
AUS	18	18	15	51
JAPAN	19	12	13	44
INDIA (RANK: 71)	0	1	5	6

Tally till 10.15pm

PARIS, 11 AUG

The 2024 Paris Olympic Games have not been kind to India. Out of 117 Indian athletes that participated in Olympics that ran from 26 July to 11 August, the nation won just six medals–five Bronze and one Silver.

It won six medals in this edition, in comparison to seven in Tokyo three years ago, which was the best medal haul for the country ever in its Olympic history.

With the biggest contingent ever, India hoped to touch the double digit tally this time.

Pistol shooter Manu Bhaker became the first Indian woman to win a shooting medal at the Olympics.

Neeraj Chopra had no answer to his opponent Arshad Nadeem's giant 92.45-metre throw. Nadeem clinched the gold this time. Aman Sehrawat became India's youngest Olympic medallist when he won bronze in wrestling.

Amid all this, Vinesh Phogat's disqualification ahead of a historic final also added to India's woes. However, she appealed for a joint silver medal but the committee has not passed any comments on that so far.

So close yet so far

Several athletes were so close to clinch a medal. Indian shooter Arjun Babuta finished fourth in the men's 10m air rifle final. Dhiraj Bommadevara and Ankita Bhakat also finished fourth in the mixed-team archery event. Manu Bhaker also missed a hat-trick of medals in women's 25m air pistol. Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Maheshwari Chauhan lost their match. Lakshya Sen lost the men's singles bronze medal match. Mirabai Chanu also finished in fourth place at the women's weightlifting event.

—Salar News with Agencies

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INDIA'S CHAMPIONS

117 Indian athletes participated Olympics. However, India won only six medals—1 Silver and 5 Bronze. Here is a list of the winners:

Neeraj Chopra: Men's Javelin Throw, Silver
Neeraj won the Silver to become the first Indian track-and-field athlete to win two Olympic medals.

Manu Bhaker: 10m Air Pistol Women's, Bronze
Bhaker bagged a Bronze and became the 1s Indian woman to win an Olympic shooting medal.

Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team, Bronze
Bhaker created history by becoming the 1st Indian to win two medals at a single Olympics after she clinched a Bronze with Singh.

Swapnil Kusale: 50m Rifle 3 Position, Bronze
Kusale becomes the first-ever Indian to win a medal in this event.

Aman Sehrawat: Men's Wrestling Freestyle 57kg, Bronze
Sehrawat became India's youngest Olympic medallist when he beat Darian Toi Cruz of Puerto Rico by 13-5 to clinch Bronze.

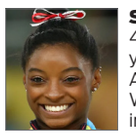
Team India: Men's Hockey, Bronze
India defeated Spain 2-1 in the third-place playoff to bag the Bronze. Skipper Harmanpreet Singh scored both goals to hand India a back-to-back medal in hockey after the Bronze at Tokyo 2020.

NEXT OLYMPICS WILL BE IN

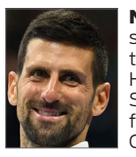
- **Paralympic Game:** Paris, France from 28 Aug to 8 Sept, 2024
- **Winter Olympics:** Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy in 2026
- **Summer Olympics:** Los Angeles, USA in 2028

THE RECORD BREAKERS

Léon Marchand: The 22-year-old French swimmer from made history by winning 5 medals. He bagged 4 Golds in 200m individual medley, breast-stroke, butterfly and 400m medley; and a Bronze in the 4x100m medley.



Simone Biles: The US gymnast added 4 Olympic medals to her collection this year as she won 3 Golds in Women's Artistic Individual, Artistic Team and Women's Vault·gymnastics; and Bronze in Women's Floor·Artistic gymnastics.



Novak Djokovic: The 38-year-old set a record for being the oldest man to win the men's singles Gold medal. He completed the Career Golden Slam, a feat achieved by winning all four Grand Slam tournaments and an Olympics Gold.

PHOTO: PTI

Hasina blames US for her removal from power

DHAKA, 11 AUG

Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who is currently taking refuge in India, has accused the US of playing a role in her removal from power as she promised a prompt return to Dhaka. In a message to party leaders and activists Hasina alleged that foreign powers, particularly the US, played a role in ousting her.

"I resigned, so that I did not have to see the procession of dead bodies.

They wanted to come to power over the dead bodies of students, but I did not allow it. I resigned from the premiership.

I could have remained in power if I had surrendered the sovereignty of Saint Martin Island and allowed America to hold sway over the Bay of Bengal," she said in a statement.

—Agencies

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Tripura teacher facing molestation charge lynched

AGARTALA, 11 AUG

Accusing a school teacher in Tripura's Gomati district of molesting a minor girl student, a mob assaulted him leading to his death two days later, a police officer said on Sunday. The police have registered an FIR in this connection, but no arrest was made. It is alleged that the man, who was in his 40s, molested the girl during a private tuition session in Udaipur town. Following this, local people severely beat up the government school teacher on Thursday. "After a severe assault, local people took him to RK Pur police station on 8 August night in presence of his wife and lodged a molestation case against him. The teacher fell ill after returning home and was admitted to the GBP Hospital in Agartala. He died during treatment on Saturday.

—PTI

Hindenburg links Adani & SEBI head; duo cries foul

SEBI claims its has just completed one probe against Adani

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

SEBI on Sunday said it has completed all but one investigation into allegations against the Adani group as it responded to US short-seller Hindenburg Research's charge of going slow on the probe, potentially because its chairperson was invested in funds at the heart of the probe - an allegation market regulator head said was "baseless" and an attempted "character assassination".

Meanwhile, while Adani group said it never had any commercial relations with Buch.

Hindenburg alleged that Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani - the elder brother of group chairman Gautam Adani - to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices.

SEBI in October 2020 began a probe into the shareholding structure of Adani group companies after red flags were raised over high concentration of foreign holdings in the conglomerate's listed companies.

SEBI last year had told a Supreme Court-appointed panel that it was investigating 13 opaque offshore entities that held between 14-20 per cent across five publicly traded stocks of the conglomerate.

Adani Group head Gautam Adani and SEBI Chief Madhabi Buch *PHOTO: PTI*

Adani Group has no relationship with the individuals mentioned in this calculated deliberate effort to malign our standing
-Adani Group

Our life and finances are an open book. Hindenburg's allegations are baseless and insinuations made in the report are devoid of any truth
-Madhabi Buch, SEBI Chief

Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch in a joint statement strongly denied the "baseless allegations and insinuations made in the report". The same, they said, "are devoid of any truth".

While the statement did not talk on the questions Hindenburg raised over SEBI probe, the duo promised to come out with a detailed response.

Separately, Adani group rejected the allegations, it said they were nothing but a "recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be baseless and already dismissed by the Supreme Court in March 2023."

These investments reportedly date back to 2015, well before her appointment as a whole-time member of SEBI in 2017 and the subsequent elevation as chairperson in March 2022.It said Bermuda-based Global Opportunities Fund, which allegedly was used by entities connected to Adani Group to trade in shares of group companies, had sub-funds. Buch and her husband were investors in one of these sub-funds in 2015.

SEBI, it claimed, has "shown a surprising lack of interest in Adani's alleged undisclosed web of Mauritius and offshore shell entities."

In January last year, Hindenburg Research accused Adani Group of pulling "the largest con in corporate history" by using a web of companies in tax havens to inflate its revenue and manipulate stock prices, even as debt piled up.

After the Hindenburg report, the Supreme Court asked market regulator SEBI to complete its investigation and set up a separate expert panel to look into regulatory lapses. The panel did not give any adverse report on Adani.

On 26 June, SEBI in a show cause notice charged Hindenburg of "deliberately sensationalising and distorting certain facts" as well as working with a New York hedge fund to make its bet.

In response to requests from the Supreme Court to investigate the Adani matter, SEBI is said to have hit a wall unveiling the holders of the offshore funds. The Supreme Court said that while SEBI seemingly agreed with its concerns over who funded Adani's offshore shareholders, "it is evident that SEBI has drawn a blank in this investigation", the firm alleged. *—PTI*

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FLOOD ALERT ON

Tungabhadra gate washes away after chain link breaks

KOPPAL/ AMARAVATI, 11 AUG

A flood alert has been sounded in the downstream of Pampa Sagar dam on Tungabhadra River in Koppal after the chain of the 19th crust gate broke, leading to the release of huge amount of water.

According to reports, the mishap occurred on Saturday night in Hospet.

Sources in the water resource department said that they would have to empty the reservoir from the existing capacity of 105 TMC to 65 to 55 TMC to carry out repair work.

The water resource department has opened all the crust gates barring five to take up repair work on an urgent basis. According to the sources, 89,000 cusecs of water is being released as of now. As of now, there is no fear of flooding in the downstream though the water flow has intensified. People have been warned not to venture near the river due to heavy outflow of water from the dam.

The sources said the dam has faced the major problem in 70 years since its construction.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh \cautioned people living along the banks of Krishna River to keep vigil, following the washing away of the Tungabhadra dam gate.

"Nearly 35,000 cusecs of floodwaters flowed and a total of 48,000 cusecs will be discharged downstream. People in Kurnool district's Kosiri, Mantralayam, Nandavaram and Kouthalam should exercise caution," he said in a press release. *—PTI*

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EX-FOREIGN MIN NATWAR SINGH DIES

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

K Natwar Singh wore many hats as he straddled the worlds of diplomacy, politics and writing but what remained consistent across decades was his sharp-wit and plainspeaking.

The former Congress leader had a love-hate relationship with the party as while he had a great equation with the likes of former prime ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, he had a fallout with Sonia Gandhi after allegations were levelled against him when he was part of the UPA-I Cabinet.

Singh died on Saturday night after a prolonged illness, family sources said. He was 93. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

4 killed, ex-MLA's wife dead in Manipur violence

IMPHAL, 11 AUG

Four armed men were killed in a fratricidal shoot-out between militants and village volunteers of the same community in Manipur's Tengnoupal district, police said. A militant belonging to the United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF) and three village volunteers of the same community were killed in the gunfight in Molnom area on Friday.

In retaliation to the killings, village volunteers set ablaze the residence of UKLF self-styled chairman SS Haokip.

Control over levy in Pallel area is suspected to be behind the gunfight, officials said.

Security forces conducted search operations but no arrests have been made so far, they said, adding the situation is under control.

Similarly, a former MLA's wife was killed in a bomb blast in Manipur's Kangpokpi district, officials said on Sunday.

The bomb blast was triggered at a house adjacent to that of former Saikul MLA Yamthong Haokip on Saturday evening, they said.

Sapam Charubala, the second wife of Haokip, was injured in the blast and was taken to a health facility in Saikul but later succumbed to her injuries, the officials said.

]More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis in Manipur since May last year. *—PTI*

IN MYANMAR

Drone attack kills 150 fleeing Rohingyas

BANGKOK, 11 AUG

At least 150 civilians from Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya minority may have been killed this week in an artillery and drone attack in the western state of Rakhine that survivors suspect was carried out by a major force in the resistance to military rule.

The Arakan Army, the military wing of the state's Rakhine ethnic group, denied responsibility for the assault Monday on Rohingya trying to flee fierce fighting in Maungdaw town by crossing the Naf River into Bangladesh.

A statement issued Friday by an international medical assistance group, Doctors Without Borders, said that in the past week, it has been treating increasing numbers of Rohingya people with violence-related injuries who managed to cross the border into Bangladesh.

The Arakan Army denied responsibility for the assault *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Two self-described survivors contacted by The Associated Press blamed the Arakan Army, as did Rohingya activists and Myanmar's military government. The attack, if confirmed, would be one of the deadliest involving civilians in the country's civil war.

Gruesome videos circulating on social media purport to show dozens of bodies of adults and children strewn along a road near the riverside. Pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic minority armed forces have been attempting to oust the country's military rulers since they seized power in 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The fighting in Rakhine has raised fears of a revival of organized violence against members of the Rohingya minority. *—AP*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

3 killed in road accident in Bidar

BIDAR, 11 AUG

Three people were killed and three others were injured critically in a head-on collision between an autorickshaw and a bus on Sunday near Janwada on the outskirts of the district headquarter town of Bidar, police said. According to the police, Anita Bai, 45, and her two children died on the spot while three others were wounded. The bodies have been shifted to the mortuary while the injured have been moved to a hospital for treatment. The deceased are the residents of Honnakeri Tanda in Bidar.
—PTI

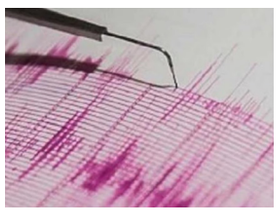


PHOTO: PTI

2.6 magnitude earthquake hits Bidar

BIDAR, 11 AUG

An earthquake with a magnitude of 2.6 struck Bidar in Karnataka on Saturday evening, according to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC). The epicenter was located 3.5km southwest of Sitalgera GP in Humnabad Taluk, Bidar district. As per the Seismic Intensity map of the said Earthquake from the Epicentre, the intensity observed is low and the tremor might be felt up to a maximum radial distance of 30-40 km from the epicentre. The epicentre falls in Seismic Zone II, where the possibility of damage due to an earthquake is very low. Also, the epicentre is void of any structural discontinuities as per the Tectonic map, KSNDMC said. The community need not panic, as the intensity observed is low and not destructive, it added. This type of earthquake does not create any harm, although there may be slight shaking locally. The epicentre falls in Seismic Zone - 2, wherein the possibility of damages due to the earthquake is very less," a press release said. Similarly, a low-intensity earthquake of a magnitude of 2.2 hit Bidar on 4 March
—ANI

2 firms assigned to repair damaged dam gate: DKS

Govt consults technical experts to address the repair needs

KOPPAL, 11 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday said two contractor firms have been approached to repair the damaged gate of Pampa Sagar Dam on Tungabhadra River.

He said the State government has consulted technical experts to address the urgent repair needs of the dam gates after the chain of Gate 19 broke, leading to a release of water since Saturday.

Speaking to reporters, Shivakumar, who also oversees the Water Resources Department, said that the government's main priority is to protect the water share allocated to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana while ensuring the necessary repairs are carried out.

Shivakumar said, "There are good technicians in Tungabhadra. The contractors Krishnaiah, Narayana and Hindustan Company are already working on this. Technical experts have identified a major challenge: the repairs to the damaged gates may not be feasible without releasing the stored water, which could disrupt the water supply."

According to him, at about 12.50 am on Sunday, the crest gate of the dam was swept away.

Water Resources Minister DK Shivakumar inspectes Tungabhadra Dam after one of its gates snapped, on Sunday PHOTO: SALAR

As there was a possibility of damage to the structure of the dam, all the gates were opened from where 38,000 cusecs of water is being released to neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, he said, adding that the inflow is 28,000 cusecs.

Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Telangana were also informed about the release of water, he added. He also said out of 38,000 cusecs of water being released, 35,000 is flowing from the 19th gate itself.

Shivakumar said the over 70-year-old dam irrigates 12 lakh acres of land. There is a separate authority for this dam, which is governed by three states -- Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

He said 63 TMC to 65 TMC water can be stored at present to see that the broken gate of the dam is repaired.

Out of the 90 TMC water to be released to the neighbouring state, 25 TMC has already been released after the gate broke.

He said the Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana governments are working together after the gate gave way. Instructions have been given to people in a 2km radius to stay alert and not to venture close to the river.

> **There is an emergency, we will not allow anyone to visit here. There is a technical aspect and this dam is a national property. We will work to protect this dam**
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

"There is an emergency, we will not allow anyone to visit here. There is a technical aspect and this dam is a national property. We will work to protect this dam," he said.

The construction of the Tungabhadra dam, a joint venture between the former Andhra and Madras states, dates back to 1953. The complex nature of the damage suggests that repairs could take over a week. Authorities have decided to replace the damaged gate with a new one to be procured from a Hyderabad-based company. The design and manufacturing process is expected to take considerable time.
—Salar News with Agencies

VIOLATION OF LAWS

State takes back 599 acres of forest land from HMT

The issue came to light in 2015 that HMT had transferred 443 acres and six guntas of reserve land to private developers PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

BENGALURU, 11 AUG

Karnataka Forest Department has issued a notice to the State's Chief Secretary, mandating the recovery of 599 acres of forest land originally granted to Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) Limited in the 1950s. The land, located in the Peenya Jalahalli Plantation Survey Nos 1 and 2 in Bengaluru, is a reserve forest area that was illegally sold by HMT to various government departments and private individuals, in violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980. The land which is valued at over Rs 10,000 crores, is now at the centre of a major legal battle.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said on Sunday, "An Interim Application (IA) was submitted to the Supreme Court by the Forest Department in 2020, seeking permission to de-notify the forest land occupied by HMT for over a decade. I have instructed the Deputy Chief Secretary to take immediate action to withdraw the IA and conduct a thorough investigation into the matter."

The issue came to light in 2015 when it was discovered that HMT had transferred 443 acres and six guntas of reserve forest land to private developers, in violation of conservation laws. Khandre criticised forest officers for failing to enforce Section 64A of the Forest Protection Act and highlighted that the land transfer to HMT was executed without proper legal procedures. In 1953, Mysuru Diwan allocated 631 acres of land to the Union government to establish HMT Limited near Jalahalli. This included 200 acres belonging to the Mysuru princely state and 431 acres owned by farmers, who received no compensation. Although the land was allocated to the Union government, the ownership remained with the State. *—Salar News*

INDEPENDENCE DAY PREP

A seller sets up national flags ahead of Independence Day in front of Bengaluru's Vidhana Soudha on Sunday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

THIRD WAVE CAFE WORKER ARRESTED OVER CAMERA ROW

BENGALURU, 11 AUG

A 23-year-old employee of a popular coffee chain, Third Wave Coffee, was arrested on Saturday after a customer discovered a hidden camera in the women's restroom. The incident has raised concerns about women's safety in City.

According to the Sadashivanagar police, a woman found a mobile phone concealed within a dustbin in the restroom. The phone was in flight mode and was recording video. The customer alerted the authorities, leading to the arrest of Manoj, a resident of Guttahalli, who had been employed at the coffee shop for over six months.

The accused has been booked under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act for unauthorised recording and distribution of private images.

In a statement, Third Wave Coffee expressed deep regret over the incident, emphasising that such actions are completely unacceptable. The company has terminated the employee and assured customers of their commitment to safety. *—Salar News*

AMBEDKAR STATUE UNVEILED

Congress leader and AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan unveils a statue of Dr BR Ambedkar along with Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao in Gandhi Nagar, Bengaluru, on Sunday PHOTO: SALAR

1.3 lakh teachers to hit Bengaluru streets in mass protest

The association demands revision of promotion rules, arguing that new cadre system should only apply to teachers appointed after 2017 PHOTO: PTI

BENGALURU, 11 AUG

In a major escalation of their ongoing dispute with the State government, approximately 1.3 lakh primary school teachers in Karnataka are set to converge on Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday for a massive 'Bengaluru Chalo' protest. This action is expected to cripple education across the State, with nearly 48,000 schools likely to remain closed.

Under the banner of the Karnataka State Primary School Teachers Association (KSPSTA), they are incensed over the government's indifference to their demands. Despite multiple attempts to engage with the Education Department, including a recent meeting with Minister Madhu Bangarappa, their concerns have been met with what they describe as a lack of serious attention. A government order that downgraded the cadre of teachers appointed before 2016 is at the heart of the teachers' discontent. The KSPSTA vehemently opposes this decision, insisting that these teachers be reinstated as Graduate Primary Teachers with their seniority intact.

> • The teachers' concerns were met with what they describe as a lack of serious attention despite many meetings

The association demands revision of promotion rules, arguing that the new cadre system should only apply to teachers appointed after 2017. They also seek recognition of graduation qualifications as per NCTE norms, enabling teachers with B.Ed degrees to be promoted to high school positions based on seniority without additional qualifications. *—Salar News*

HAPPY AFTER GOOD RAINS: HDK JOINS FARMERS TO PLANT PADDY SAPLINGS

BENGALURU, 11 AUG

After completing the 10-day Mysuru Chalo Padayatra on the MUDA scam, JDS leader and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy participated with farmers in Mandya district to plant paddy saplings and said that farmers are happy to work in the fields because the state has witnessed good rains this year.

The paddy saplings were planted in the paddy fields of the farmer Lakshman in Sithapur village of Pandavapura taluk in Mandya district. *—ANI*

INTAKE NOW 200

Mys college gets nod for 50+ MBBS seats

MYSURU, 11 AUG

In a boost to medical education, the National Medical Council (NMC) has approved an increase of 50 undergraduate MBBS seats for the Mysuru Medical College and Research Institute (MMCRI). This takes the total MBBS intake to 200 students from the upcoming academic year 2024-25.

Established in 1924, MMCRI is the State's first medical college and has been seeking an increase in its intake capacity since 2021. The NMC finally granted permission after a rigorous evaluation process that included a site visit last year.

However, the college is also facing a shortage of faculty and has appealed to the government to fill vacant positions.

MMCRI is the State's 1st medical college PHOTO: MBBSCOUNCIL

Speaking to Salar, Dean and Director of MMCRI Dr KR Dakshayini said that NMC did not approve a similar hike in postgraduate (PG) seats.

Currently, 640 students are studying in MMCRI including 150 MBBS students, 150 postgraduate medical students, 100 BSc nursing, 40 GNM, 100 paramedical and 100 BSc allied health sciences.

MMCRI was founded by the erstwhile Maharaja of Mysore Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar in 1924. As the MBBS seat matrix process is still going on, the admission process is likely to be completed by next September for an additional 50 seats, said sources.

The increase in UG seats will help its constituent hospitals KR Hospital to ensure better service from interns as they serve the hospitals for six months as part of their degree.

The 1,200-bed KR Hospital sees more than 2,000 inpatients daily not only from Mysuru but also from Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Mandya, and Madikeri districts. *—Salar News*

HDK TUNRS FARMER

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy sows paddy in a field in Mandya on Sunday PHOTO: SALAR

Ex-Kerala Minister Kutty Ahammed dies at 71

MALAPPURAM, 11 AUG

Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) veteran Kutty Ahammed Kutty died at his residence in Tanur here due to age-related ailments, family sources said. He was 71. A three-time MLA who had represented Tanur and Tirurangadi segments in the State Assembly years ago, Kutty had held the Local Self Government portfolio in the Oommen Chandy-led UDF government. He had been inactive in politics for some years after a car accident years ago. Currently a member of the IUML's state executive, he had also served as the state vice president and as district secretary of the party. He is survived by wife and three children. Cutting across politics, people from various walks of life including Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly VD Satheesan and senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala condoled his demise.—*PTI*

Phone, WhatsApp hacked, claims Supriya Sule

PUNE, 11 AUG

NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule has alleged that her phone and WhatsApp have been hacked. In a post on 'X' on Sunday, the Baramati legislator requested people not to call or message her. "My phone and WhatsApp have been hacked. Please do not message or call me. Please note that I am filing a police complaint," Sule wrote. According to a source close to the NCP (SP) leader, a police complaint regarding the hacking was lodged online. —*PTI*

SC to hear Kejri's plea in defamation case today

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging a Delhi High Court order upholding the summons issued to him in a criminal defamation case for retweeting an allegedly defamatory video circulated by YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in May 2018. A three-judge bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna, Sanjay Kumar and R Mahadevan is likely to hear the matter in which Kejriwal has admitted that he "committed a mistake" by retweeting the alleged defamatory video. On 11 March, the Top Court asked Kejriwal whether he wanted to give an apology to the complainant in the matter. Kejriwal had on 26 February told the Apex Court that he made a mistake by retweeting the allegedly defamatory video related to the BJP IT Cell. The top court had asked the trial court not to take up the defamation case involving Kejriwal till further orders. —*PTI*

SC to hear bail plea of Senthil Balaji in laundering case

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday the bail plea of former Tamil Nadu minister V Senthil Balaji, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate last year in connection with a money laundering case. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih is scheduled to hear Balaji's plea challenging the 28 February order of the Madras High Court dismissing his second bail petition in the case. The High Court, while dismissing the bail petition, said that if he is let out on bail in a case of this nature, it will send a wrong signal and it will be against larger public interest. Balaji was arrested on 14 June last year by the ED in connection with a money laundering case linked to a cash-for-jobs scam when he was the transport minister during an earlier AIADMK regime. —*PTI*

Oppn hits out at govt over Hindenburg report

Cong, Left urge for JPC to probe the row

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said that SEBI had previously cleared Adani before the Supreme Court following Hindenburg's claims *PHOTO: PTI*

In the wake of the US short-seller Hindenburg Research's allegations against SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch, Congress on Sunday said the government must act immediately to eliminate all conflicts of interest in the regulator's investigation of the Adani Group and reiterated its demand for a joint parliamentary committee probe into the matter. The Opposition party also said the "seeming complicity of the highest officials of the land" can only be resolved by setting up a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to investigate the full scope of the "scam".

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said SEBI had previously cleared "Adani, a close associate of Prime Minister Mo di, before the Supreme Court following the January 2023 Hindenburg Report revelations".

Echoing on similar demands Left parties also urged for JPC to probe the allegations.

"Given these serious charges against the head of the regulatory authority, it is necessary that the Chairperson step aside till a proper investigation is conducted," the CPI(M) said. "The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) reiterates its demand that the entire affair of the stock market manipulation of shares of the Adani group be probed by setting up a Joint Parliamentary Committee," it said.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said the SEBI had told a Supreme Court panel that the investigation into the Adani group was "directionless".

"SEBI chief and her husband's money was invested in shell companies. Why were these facts hidden from the Supreme Court?" he said.

TMC also demanded that SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch should immediately be suspended in the wake of the allegations.

—*PTI*

Oppn part of conspiracy to cause destability: BJP

BJP says Hindenburg is facing Indian probe

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that the firm has attacked market regulator SEBI in obvious partnership with Congress *PHOTO: PTI*

BJP on Sunday alleged that Congress and other Opposition parties are part of a conspiracy to create financial instability and chaos in India, as the ruling party rejected Hindenburg's charge against the SEBI Chairperson as an attempt to discredit the financial watchdog.

BJP Spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the short-selling firm, which last year levelled serious allegations against the Adani group, is facing scrutiny from Indian probe agencies.

Opposition parties are echoing its allegation, and the conspiracy is now clearly visible that they want to create chaos and instability, especially in the financial sector, he said.

Noting that many such critical reports emanating from foreign soil are released just ahead of or during Parliament sessions, he said Opposition leaders were aware that the report was coming when Parliament was scheduled to meet.

The Monsoon session of Parliament was scheduled to end on Monday but was cut short by one working day and got over on Friday.

BJP leader and former Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said the short-selling firm has clearly attacked market regulator SEBI in an "obvious partnership" with Congress and has a ominous motive and goal.

He said he has read the report which, he claimed, is a classic "Congress style innuendo and lies glued together", aimed at discrediting the regulator and causing chaos and losses in markets for investors to slow down bullish sentiments. The Hindenburg Research on Saturday launched a broadside against market regulator SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch, alleging she and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal. —*PTI*

PM releases 109 climate-resilient seed varieties

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday released 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient and biofortified seed varieties of agricultural and horticultural crops, aiming to enhance farm productivity and farmers' income.

Developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), these varieties span 61 crops, including 34 field crops and 27 horticultural crops.

Modi unveiled the seeds at three experimental agriculture plots at Delhi's Pusa Campus, where he also interacted with farmers and scientists.

According to an official statement, Modi stressed on the significance of value addition in agriculture while discussing the importance of these new varieties with farmers.

Farmers present on the occasion said that these new varieties would be highly beneficial to them because of lower input cost.

The Prime Minister discussed the importance of millets and underlined how people are moving towards nutritious food. He also talked about the benefits of natural farming and the increasing faith of common people towards organic farming. Modi noted that people have started consuming and demanding organic foods.

Farmers appreciated the efforts of the government in promotion of natural farming. They also lauded the role played by Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) in creating awareness, the release said.

Modi suggested that the KVKs should proactively inform farmers about the benefits of the new varieties being developed every month to create awareness about their benefits, the statement said.

The field crop varieties include cereals, millets, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, and fibre crops.

For horticulture, the PM released new varieties of fruits, vegetables, plantation crops, tubers, spices, flowers, and medicinal plants.

—*PTI*

Sharad claims farmer suicides have doubled under BJP rule

SOLAPUR, 11 AUG

NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar on Sunday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his assurance of doubling the income of farmers, claiming the BJP rule had, in fact, witnessed the doubling of farmer suicides. Addressing a rally at Barshi town in Maharashtra's Solapur district, Pawar claimed farmers were not getting adequate prices for their produce and had become debt-ridden. "The Prime Minister had promised to double the income of farmers, but instead, farmer suicides have doubled," he charged. Pawar pointed out that the BJP could not even win 300 seats in the recent Lok Sabha elections despite its slogan "400 paar". "It could form the government with the help of parties from Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. The need of the hour is to reduce the debt burden on farmers, and hence, loans should be waived," he said, citing that he had done so when he held the charge of the agriculture ministry. —*PTI*

ANOTHER COLLAPSE

A small bridge collapsed in the Raghopur block of Bihar's Vaishali district, an official said on Sunday. No casualty was reported. This comes in the backdrop of more than a dozen bridge collapses recently *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

MALDIVES KEY ALLY FOR INDIA IN INDIAN OCEAN REGION: EAM

MALE, 11 AUG

The Maldives is a key partner for India in the Indian Ocean region and the two nations aspire to turn their cooperation into a modern partnership, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday.

Jaishankar's remarks came as he along with his Maldivian counterpart Moosa Zameer attended the handing over ceremony of Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project and inauguration of the 4-lane Detour Link road project facilitated by the Government of India under the Line of Credit of EXIM Bank. In the last few years, India invested around USD 220 million which provides a fair idea of the importance that India attaches to regional development in the Maldives, he said. —*PTI*

Maldives' Oppn hails Muizzu's India policy shift

MALE, 11 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Main Opposition Maldivian Democratic Party has welcomed the recalibration of the India policy by President Mohammad Muizzu-led government and said that the Maldives is confident that India will always be the first to assist it in times of emergency.

Abdulla Shahid, the president of the Maldivian Democratic Party, made the remarks after he met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar here on Saturday.

Jaishankar is on a three-day official visit to Maldives to reset the bilateral relationship, the first high-level trip from India after the archipelago nation's pro-China President Muizzu assumed office last year."Great pleasure to warmly welcome and meet Indian External Affairs Minister @DrSJaishankar to the Maldives with my colleagues from @MDPSecretariat," Shahid, the former foreign minister, said on 'X' late Saturday night.

"The Maldives has always been confident that India will always be the first responder any time the Maldives "dials an international 911"," he said.

India's relationship with the Maldives has come under severe strain since Muizzu took charge as the President late last year. —*PTI*

BSP WILL CONTEST ALL 10 ASSEMBLY SEATS: MAYAWATI

LUCKNOW, 11 AUG

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Sunday announced that her party will field candidates in all the 10 Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh where bypolls are going to be held.

The Election Commission is yet to declare the schedule for the by-elections to Karhal, Milkipur, Katehari, Kundarki, Ghaziabad, Khair, Meerapur, Phulpur, Majhawan and Sisamau assembly seats.

In a statement, released after a meeting of the BSP's State unit district chiefs, office bearers and functionaries, the party said Mayawati reviewed the preparations for the upcoming Assembly bypolls.

By-elections were necessitated for nine seats as the MLAs were elected to the Lok Sabha. The Sisamau seat fell vacant due to the disqualification SP leader Irfan Solanki as MLA after he was sentenced to jail in a criminal case.

Mounting an attack on the BJP, Mayawati said, "There is tremendous anger among the common public as the BJP government at the Centre and in the State has not only failed in stopping rising poverty, unemployment, price rise and backwardness but has also not paid enough attention towards this."

—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

MARATHAS HALT SHARAD'S CONVOY

SOLAPUR, 11 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar on Sunday faced angry Maratha agitators in separate incidents who stopped his vehicle in Solapur district and later raised slogans and waved black flags when the veteran politician was addressing a rally in Barshi town.

Visuals aired by television channels showed a group of people raising "Maratha aarakshan" slogans stopping Pawar's SUV, asking him to clarify his stand. He can be heard saying he supported the reservation but protesters said he was not speaking his mind on the issue. —*PTI*

11 B'deshis held, says BSF

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Eleven Bangladeshi nationals have been apprehended while trying to infiltrate into India through international border in West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya, the Border Security Force (BSF) said on Sunday. They are being questioned and will be handed over to state police, a spokesperson said.

The BSF is in regular touch with its counterpart to sort out mutual issues. —*PTI*

No influx of B'deshis: Odisha

Odisha Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan asserted there was no report of an influx of Bangladeshis into the state. He said Bangladeshis staying illegally will be identified and repatriated.

SEASONED DIPLOMAT

K Natwar Singh: A man who wore many hats and spoke his mind

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

K Natwar Singh wore many hats as he straddled the worlds of diplomacy, politics and writing but what remained consistent across decades was his sharp-wit and plainspeaking.

Singh breathed his last at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram near Delhi, where he had been admitted for the past couple of weeks.

He had a love-hate relationship with Congress while he had a great equation with former prime ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. He had a fallout with Sonia Gandhi after allegations were levelled against him when he was part of the UPA-I Cabinet.

Singh was born in 1931 in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan.

Singh was selected into the Indian Foreign Service in 1953 but in 1984, he resigned to contest elections as a member of Congress. He won the election and served as a Union minister of state until 1989.

He was also appointed secretary-general of the Seventh Non-aligned Summit in New Delhi held in 1983 and Chief Coordinator of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in New Delhi in the same year.

Singh was selected into the Indian Foreign Service in 1953 but in 1984, he resigned to contest elections as a member of Congress *PHOTO: PTI*

He served as secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs from March 1982 to November 1984. He was bestowed the third highest civilian award Padma Bhushan in 1984. In 1984, he joined the Congress and was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Bharatpur constituency in Rajasthan.

- Singh breathed his last at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram near Delhi, where he had been admitted for the past couple of weeks.

In 1985, he was sworn in as a minister of state and allotted the portfolios of steel, coal and mines, and agriculture. In 1986, he became minister of state for external affairs.

He was made the external affairs minister in 2004 when Congress returned to power.

Singh had to quit as minister and later resigned from the Congress, upset that Sonia Gandhi had not defended him in investigation of corruption in the Oil-for-Food programme.

Singh has been critical of Sonia Gandhi since and often criticised her in interviews and at events. Singh also authored several books including, 'The Legacy of Nehru: A Memorial Tribute' and 'My China Diary 1956-88'. His autobiography is titled 'One Life is Not Enough'.

—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

UP to open two varsities to affiliate madrassas

LUCKNOW, 11 AUG

Seeking to make changes in the process of granting recognition to madrassas, Uttar Pradesh Minority Welfare Minister Om Prakash Rajbhar has said that two universities will be opened in the State and all madrassas will be affiliated to them. "Our effort is to open two universities. We want to attach the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education with the university and all madrassas should be recognised (by the university) so that there is no dispute in the future," he told PTI Videos recently. He noted that many colleges are affiliated to the Lucknow University, Purvanchal University and Shakuntala University. Citing a letter by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) dated 7 June, then Uttar Pradesh chief secretary Durga Shankar Mishra on 26 June had issued directions to all district magistrates on children studying in madrassas. *—PTI*

Odisha govt starts selling potatoes at Rs 100 for 3 kg

BHUBANESWAR, 11 AUG

The Odisha government has started selling potatoes at Rs 100 for 3kg in retail shops across the State under the public distribution system (PDS). Food Supply and Consumer Welfare Minister KC Patra on Sunday said potatoes have been sent to different places in the State through NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd). The government retail shops have started selling the kitchen essential at a price of Rs 100 per 3kg, Patra said. Odisha has been facing an acute potato crisis after neighbouring West Bengal stopped transportation of the tuber and traders from the state refused to purchase it from Uttar Pradesh stating that people don't like the variety available in the northern state. *—PTI*

Boy electrocuted while playing cricket in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

A 13-year-old boy died due to electrocution when he came in contact with an electric pole while playing cricket in the Ranhola area of outer Delhi, police said on Sunday. "We got a PCR call on Saturday at 1.27pm at the Ranhola police station regarding the death of a boy due to electrocution in Kotla Vihar Phase-2," Deputy Commissioner of Police (outer) Jimmy Chiram said. He was immediately taken to DDU Hospital by PCR van where he was declared brought dead, said the DCP. Police said that an FIR under Section 106 (1) of the BNS has been registered and investigation has been taken up. Meanwhile, the victim's mother Anita Devi demanded strict action against the gaushala (cowshed) and the Power Department. *—PTI*

Illegal arms factory busted, two arrested in MP

MORENA, 11 AUG

Police have unearthed an illegal arms factory in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district and arrested a manson duo after a video showed a woman washing some pistols with soap to make them shine, an official said. After verification of the video, a police team on Friday night raided a house in Ganeshpura area from where the illegal arms unit was being operated for the last six months, Mahua police station in-charge Pawan Singh told reporters on Saturday. Three country-made pistols, several half-made weapons, various other equipment and materials were seized from the factory, he said. *—PTI*

Resident doctors to halt services over Kolkata rape

A cop claims that the doctor was 1st murdered & then raped

KOLKATA/ NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

The Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) has announced a nationwide halting of elective services in hospitals on Monday in solidarity with the state-run RG Kar Medical College residents over the rape and murder of a doctor in the hospital in Kolkata.

The indefinite strike is being called to demand immediate action and protection for all healthcare workers, the doctors said, as they urged for an immediate and transparent probe with "severe punishment for those responsible".

Several government hospitals released official statements on Sunday announcing the shutdown of outpatient departments (OPDs), operation theatres (OTs), and ward duties starting Monday morning.

Doctors, post graduate medicos and medical teachers in Kerala will also hold a protest in government medical colleges across the state on Monday.

Junior doctors and medical students protest against the sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

The semi-naked body of the 32-year-old woman was found in the seminar hall of the government-run hospital in the West Bengal capital on Thursday night.

FORDA president Dr Aviral Mathur emphasised that the safety of doctors must be prioritised to allow them to continue their crucial work without fear.

"We can no longer stand by while our safety is compromised. The recent horrific rape and murder of a fellow doctor on hospital premises is the final straw," Dr Mathur said.

Meanwhile, Kolkata Police were waiting for the final post-mortem examination report to come to a conclusion regarding the murder The preliminary autopsy report suggested that she was sexually abused and murdered.

The initial autopsy report indicated that she was murdered after being sexually assaulted and ruled out suicide, police said.

The report stated, "There was bleeding from both her eyes and mouth and injuries over the face. The victim was also bleeding from her private parts. She also has injuries in her belly, left leg... neck, in her right hand, ring finger and... lips."

Meanwhile, another police officer said that circumstantial evidence indicated a possibility that the woman doctor was first murdered and then raped by the arrested accused. West Bengal BJP President Sukanta Majumdar on Sunday in a letter to Union Health Minister JP Nadda demanded a CBI probe into the case. *—PTI*

Two dozen IAS officers transferred in MP, J'khand

RANCHI/BHOPAL, 11 AUG

In a major bureaucratic reshuffle, the Jharkhand government transferred around two dozen IAS officers, including Principal Secretary to the Governor, Nitin Madan Kulkarni, at Raj Bhavan and replaced him with Vipra Bhal.

Madhya Pradesh government too transferred 26 IAS officers, including eight district collectors, and 21 IPS officers.

Bhal, a 2006-batch IAS officer, posted as Secretary to the Information Technology and E-Governance Department, has been transferred and appointed as Principal Secretary to the Governor, according to a notification issued by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms late on Saturday night.

Kulkarni, meanwhile, has been posted as Principal Secretary of the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperative Department.

Mast Ram Meena, Principal Secretary, Planning and Development Department, will also hold the additional charge of Principal Secretary, Drinking Water and Sanitation Department. *—PTI*

J&K ON EDGE

Security personnel during an encounter with terrorists at Ahlan Gagarmandu forest area, in Kashmir's Anantnag *PHOTO: PTI*

Civilian dies in Anantnag encounter, death toll reaches 3

SRINAGAR, 11 AUG

The death toll in the overnight anti-terror operation in Anantnag of Jammu and Kashmir rose to three on Sunday as one of the two civilians injured in the encounter succumbed, officials said.

Abdul Rashid Dar, who was injured in terrorist firing on Saturday, succumbed to injuries at a hospital here early Sunday, the officials said.

Two Army personnel were killed and two civilians injured in a fierce gunfight with terrorists in the Ahlan Gagarmandu forest area of Anantnag district at an altitude of 10,000 feet on Saturday, officials said.

The operation to hunt down the ultras continued despite the challenging topography.

The firefight started on Saturday during a cordon and search operation that was initiated by the security forces based on intelligence reports indicating the presence of terrorists in the remote Ahlan Gagarmandu forest in the Kokernag belt. According to officials, a group of terrorists opened fire at the joint search parties comprising Army personnel, including para commandos, and local police.

Reinforcements have been deployed in the area and operations to locate and neutralise the fleeing terrorists are underway, the officials said.

Security forces have ramped up their efforts in the woods of Kokernag after an encounter in Doda district on July 15 that resulted in the deaths of four soldiers, including a captain.

It is believed that the terrorists involved in the recent Anantnag incident may have crossed over from Kishtwar district after escaping the confrontation in Doda.

A Srinagar-based defence spokesperson said that on 5 August, it was confirmed that terrorists responsible for atrocities in the Doda region in July have sneaked across the Kishtwar range into the Kapran-Garol area in south Kashmir. *—PTI*

RAIN CHECK

Civilians search for the missing in Wayanad

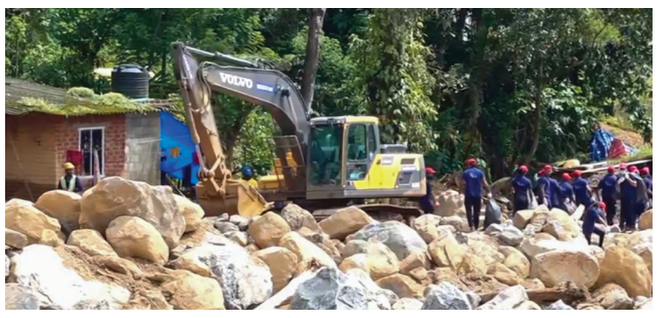
WAYANAD,11 AUG

After a day's break, an extensive search resumed in landslide-hit Wayanad on Sunday morning to find those who are still missing in the aftermath of the devastating calamity that hit the hill district on 30 July.

The search operations took a break on Friday afternoon as the area was handed over to the SPG in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the disaster-hit Mundakkai and Chooralmala regions on Saturday.

Besides the police and fire force personnel, volunteers of various service and youth outfits, survivors of the landslides and kin of the victims also became part of the search operations.

Hundreds of civil volunteers including women could be seen marching towards the mountain regions crossing the Bailey bridge, constructed by the Army recently, here in the morning. *—PTI*



Search and rescue operation underway at a landslide-hit area in Kerala's Wayanad, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Fears of breach in Guj as dam's level rises

The Vadodara administration on Sunday alerted 25 villages in the district after release of water from the Omkareshwar dam in Madhya Pradesh and heavy rains led to a rise in the Sardar Sarovar dam level in Gujarat's Narmada. Residents have been asked not to venture near Narmada river.

8 die after swollen river sweeps away car

Eighr members of a family died and three others went missing after their vehicle got swept away by the flooded Jaijon Choe, a seasonal rivulet around 34 km from here on Sunday, police said. The rivulet was swollen due to heavy rainfall that lashed several parts of Punjab and other areas.

2 dead as house falls after rains in R'than

A 40-year-old man and his son were killed and two others injured when their house collapsed following heavy rain in Rajasthan's Karauli district early Sunday, officials said. Heavy rainfall was recorded in parts of Rajasthan, including Dausa, Bharatpur, Sawai Madhopur, and Kota.

Rains lead to more floods, landslides in HP

SHIMLA, 11 AUG

Landslides and flash floods triggered by heavy rains over the last two days has led to the closure of more than 280 roads in Himachal Pradesh, with 150 being closed on Saturday, according to officials.Water from overflowing streams has entered several houses in Una while the Lahaul and Spiti police have issued an advisory for residents and travellers to exercise extreme caution and not to cross the Jahalman Nallah as its water level is "rapidly" rising, they said.

Rescue operations to trace about 30 people who went missing after the 31 July flash floods in Kullu, Mandi and Shimla district are being conducted but there has been no major success. So far, 28 bodies have been recovered, the officials said.

More than 100 people have been killed, and the state has suffered losses of about Rs 842 crore, they said. *—PTI*

Woman raped after brother elopes in UP

LUDHIANA, 11 AUG

A man along with three family members allegedly gang-raped a married woman here to avenge the perceived humiliation after his daughter eloped with the victim's brother, police said on Sunday.

The accused, who hail from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, also allegedly recorded the act on their mobile phones, they added.

Although the incident took place on 1 May, the victim was too traumatised to report the matter for a long time, the police said.

It was only after she recovered and stabilised from the trauma of the alleged gangrape that she approached the police for filing the complaint. A case has been registered at Tibba Road Police Station against the four accused -- Ravinder Singh, his brother Varinder Singh, son Aman Singh and another associate Santosh Singh, they added. *—PTI*

Casual remark on 'bomb' at Kochi airport lands flyer in soup

KOCHI, 11 AUG

A casual reference to a 'bomb' made during a routine security check at the international airport here led to the arrest of a Mumbai-bound passenger.

The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) on Sunday said Manoj Kumar, 42, who was scheduled to fly from Cochin to Mumbai by an Air India flight on Sunday morning made an "alarming" comment to a CISF officer at the x-ray baggage inspection counter.

"During the pre-embarkation security check, Kumar asked the CISF officer, "Is there any bomb in my bag?" This statement triggered immediate concern and prompted the airport security team to take swift action," CIAL said.

The airport authority said the passenger's cabin and checked baggage were thoroughly inspected by the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS).

After completing the necessary checks, which revealed no threat, Kumar was handed over to the local police for further investigation, CIAL said.

The Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC), which was convened to assess the situation, classified the threat as "non-specific," meaning it was not credible but still required a full security response.

The BTAC concluded its proceedings and the flight departed on time, CIAL added.

The airport authority said the security has been heightened at all the airports in view of the Independence Day approaching,

The Cochin International Airport has already issued an advisory urging passengers to arrive at the airport well in advance of their scheduled flights to avoid delays due to the increased security measures during this generally busy season. *—PTI*

MEN OPERATE FIRE EXTINGUISHER

12 jump out of train amid fire rumour

SHAHJAHANPUR/NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Six passengers were hospitalised after they jumped out of a moving train in panic near Uttar Pradesh's Bilpur on Sunday following rumours of a fire, Government Railway Police (GRP) officials said.

Earlier, Northern Railway spokesperson Kultar Singh had said that "12 passengers have been injured".

The incident took place in a general coach of the Howrah-Amritsar Mail in the morning near Bilpur station, which falls under the Moradabad division, he said.

GRP station in-charge Rehan Khan told PTI that when the train reached Bilpur station in Bareilly, a rumour spread that the train has caught fire.

Someone pulled the emergency chain to stop the train and some passengers started jumping from the moving train, he said.

The incident took place in a general coach of the Howrah-Amritsar Mail in the morning near Bilpur station *PHOTO: PTI*

Six passengers, including two women, were injured, and they were admitted to the Shahjahanpur Medical College, the GRP official said.

The railway official had earlier said passengers pulled the chain for an emergency stop and jumped out of the train in panic while it was still moving. *—PTI*

Alert from track heat averts tragedy

An alert from an automated track device averted a train accident in Mirzapur as it warned officials of a hot wheel axle in a Seemanchal Express coach when it crossed over the heat detection equipment. Officials said the real-time alert was sent from the hot axle box detector at the Chunar station.

Benefit of doubt: Court acquits man of dowry death

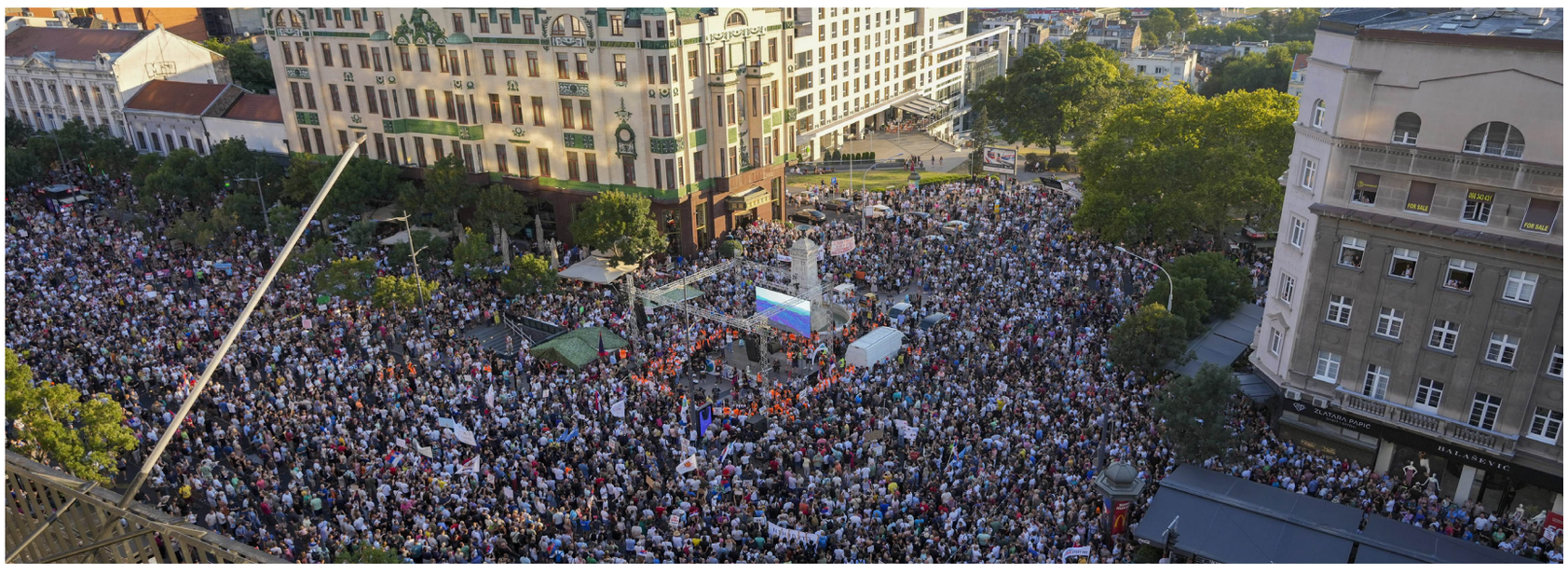
NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Delhi's Dwarka Court recently acquitted a man of charges related to dowry death, citing benefits of the doubt. There is a long distance between "may be true" and "must be true", the court said in the judgement.

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Sharad Gupta acquitted the accused, Satender Gautam, of offences under Section 498A IPC (cruelty for dowry) and Section 304B IPC (dowry death). The court concluded that the prosecution failed to prove its case against accused Satender Gautam by leading convincing or cogent evidence.

"It is a cardinal principle of criminal jurisprudence that an accused is presumed to be innocent. The burden lies on the prosecution to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt. The prosecution is under a legal obligation to prove each and every ingredient of offence beyond any doubt, unless otherwise so provided by any statute. This general burden never shifts, it always rests on the prosecution," ASJ Gupta said in the judgement passed on 29 July. The deceased, Poonam Sharma, had committed suicide on 26 November, 2011. She had married Gautam in 2009 in Khurja, UP, in a love marriage. They were residing in Najafgarh at the time of her death. *—ANI*



PROTEST AGAINST POLLUTION

Thousands of people have taken to the streets of the Serbian capital to protest against the rebooting of a controversial lithium mine set to serve as a vital power source in Europe's green energy transition. During the rally in Belgrade, two leading protest figures said they were briefly detained by security officials who warned that any moves to block roads during the demonstration would be seen as illegal
PHOTO: PTI

SEBI chief hand in gloves with Adani: Hindenburg

18 months since our Adani report, Sebi has shown a surprising lack of interest in Adani's alleged undisclosed web of Mauritius and offshore shell entities

It has been nearly 18 months since our original report on the Adani Group presented overwhelming evidence that the Indian conglomerate was operating "the largest con in corporate history". Our report exposed a web of offshore, primarily Mauritius-based shell entities used for suspected billions of dollars of undisclosed related party transactions, undisclosed investment and stock manipulation.

Since then, despite the evidence, along with over 40 independent media investigations corroborating and expanding on our original work, Indian securities regulator SEBI has taken no public action against the Adani Group. Media has reported that SEBI is likely to impose mere token, technical violations on the Adani Group despite the breadth and magnitude of the issues.

Instead, on June 27th, 2024, SEBI sent us an apparent 'show cause' notice. SEBI did not allege any factual errors in our 106-page analysis, but instead claimed the disclosure around our short position– which we disclosed repeatedly– was deficient, arguing that we should have provided even more robust disclosure.

The SEBI notice also claimed our report was "reckless" for quoting a banned broker with specific experience dealing with SEBI who detailed how the regulator was fully aware that firms like Adani used complex offshore entities to flout rules, and that the regulator participated in the schemes.

In our July 2024 response to the 'show cause' notice, we wrote that we found it odd how SEBI—a regulator specifically set up to prevent fraudulent practices – showed little interest in meaningfully pursuing the parties that ran a secret offshore shell empire engaging in billions of dollars of undisclosed related party transactions through public companies while propping up its stocks through a network of sham investment entities.

The Indian Supreme Court said that SEBI had drawn a blank in its investigation of these shareholders, as detailed in the court records. In late June 2024, Adani CFO Jugeshinder Singh described some regulator notices aimed towards Adani Group as "trivial", apparently writing off the prospect of their severity even before the process was concluded.

"IPE plus fund" is a small offshore Mauritius fund set up by an Adani director through India Infoline (IIFL), a wealth management firm with ties to the Wirecard scandal.

Vinod Adani – brother of Gautam Adani – used this structure to invest in indian markets with funds allegedly siphoned from over invoicing of power equipment to the Adani group

As detailed in our original Adani report, documents from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) alleged that Adani "grossly" overvalued the import valuation of key power equipment, using offshore shell entities to siphon and launder money from the Indian public.

In one complex structure, a Vinod Adani controlled company had invested in "Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund" ("GDOF"") in Bermuda, a British overseas territory and tax haven, which then invested in IPE Plus Fund 1, a fund registered in Mauritius, another tax haven.

A separate investigation by the Financial Times showed that the parent fund of GDOF – the Bermuda-based Global Opportunities Fund ("GOF") – was used by two Adani associates "to amass and trade large positions in shares of the Adani Group".

These nested funds are managed by Indian Infoline ("IIFL"), now called 360 One per private fund data and IIFL's marketing material.

IIFL, is a publicly listed wealth management firm in India which has a long history in setting up convoluted fund structures and with previous ties to the Wirecard scandal, Germany's largest ever fraud case. IIFL Wealth was alleged to have committed fraud in a takeover deal involving Wirecard, using a Mauritius fund structure, per a lawsuit in UK courts.

AdaniWatch reported that "by March 2017, ATIL, a Vinod Adani company, had a total balance of $40.38 million with GDOF". Thus, while we are unable to see the total assets of parent fund GDOF, it appears a significant portion of the assets of the funds may be comprised of Adani money.

Beyond being used as an alleged funnel for Vinod Adani's money, the tiny fund had other close ties to Adani. The Founder and Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of the IPE Plus Fund was Anil Ahuja, per his biography. At the same time, Ahuja was a director of Adani Enterprises where he served three terms spanning nine years ending in June 2017, per his biography and exchange disclosures. Prior to that he was a director of Adani Power.

Documents show that Madhabi Buch, the current chairperson of Sebi, and her husband had stakes in both obscure offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal

We had previously noted Adani's total confidence in continuing to operate without the risk of serious regulatory intervention, suggesting that this may be explained through Adani's relationship with SEBI Chairperson, Madhabi Buch. What we hadn't realized: the current SEBI Chairperson and her husband, Dhaval Buch, had hidden stakes in the exact same obscure offshore Bermuda and Mauritius funds, found in the same complex nested structure, used by Vinod. Madhabi Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch first appear to have opened their account with IPE Plus Fund 1 on June 5th, 2015 in Singapore, per whistleblower documents.

A declaration of funds, signed by a principal at IIFL states that the source of the investment is "salary" and the couple´s net worth is estimated at $10 million. Madhabi Buch was appointed a "Whole Time Member" of SEBI in April 2017, according to her LinkedIn profile.

On March 22nd, 2017, just weeks ahead of that politically sensitive appointment, Madhabi's husband, Dhaval Buch, wrote to Mauritius fund administrator Trident Trust, according to documents we received from a whistleblower. The email was regarding his and his wife's investment in the Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund ("GDOF").

In the letter, Dhaval Buch requested to "be the sole person authorised to operate the Accounts", seemingly moving the assets out of his wife's name ahead of the politically sensitive appointment.

In a later account statement dated February 26th, 2018, addressed to Madhabi Buch's private email, the full details of the structure are revealed: "GDOF Cell 90 (IPEplus Fund 1)". Again, this is the exact same Mauritius-registered "cell" of the fund, found several layers deep in a convoluted structure, reportedly used by Vinod Adani.

The total value of Buch's stake was worth U.S. $872,762.25 at the time.

Later, on February 25th, 2018, during Buch's tenure as a Whole-Time Member of SEBI, whistleblower documents show she personally wrote to India Infoline using her private Gmail account, doing business through her husband's name, to redeem the units in the fund.

In brief, despite the existence of thousands of mainstream, reputable onshore Indian mutual fund products, an industry she now is responsible for regulating, documents show SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch and her husband had stakes in a multi-layered offshore fund structure with miniscule assets, traversing known high-risk jurisdictions, overseen by a company with reported ties to the Wirecard scandal, in the same entity run by an Adani director and significantly used by Vinod Adani in the alleged Adani cash siphoning scandal.

The Supreme Court said that Sebi had "drawn a blank" in its investigations into who funded Adani's offshore shareholders If Sebi really wanted to find the offshore fund holders, perhaps the Sebi chairperson could have started by looking in the mirror

In response to requests from the Indian Supreme Court to investigate the Adani matter, SEBI was said to have a hit a wall unveiling the holders of the offshore funds. The Supreme Court said that while SEBI seemingly agreed with our concerns over who funded Adani's offshore shareholders, "it is evident that SEBI has drawn a blank in this investigation."

We suspect SEBI's unwillingness to take meaningful action against suspect offshore shareholders in the Adani Group may stem from Chairperson Madhabi Buch's complicity in using the exact same funds used by Vinod Adani, brother of Gautam Adani. To Date, SEBI has taken no action against other suspect Adani shareholders operated by India Infoline: Em resurgent fund and emerging India focus funds

In our original report, we identified, among other funds, two Mauritius entities called EM Resurgent Fund and Emerging India Focus Funds. Both entities were disclosed as related parties of India Infoline (now called 360 One) and overseen by its employees, per its annual reports.

We noted that the "the trading patterns [of these funds] suggest that the stock parking entities and the suspicious offshore entities may have artificially inflated the volume and/or price of some Adani listed companies."

Our concerns were further corroborated by an investigation by the Financial Times, which found a "secret paper trail" at EM Resurgent and Emerging India Focus Funds. The investigation raised questions whether Adani used business associates as "front men" to "bypass rules for Indian companies that prevent share price manipulation."

To date, SEBI has taken no action against these funds.

On March 16th, 2022, two weeks after her appointment as Sebi chairperson, she quietly transferred the shares to her husband

On March 27th, 2013, Agora Partners Pte Ltd was registered in Singapore. It describes itself as a "business and management consultancy", per a Singapore director search. [Pgs. 1-3] At the time, Madhabi Buch was disclosed as a 100% shareholder, according to the company's 2014 annual return.

In April 2017, Madhabi Buch joined SEBI as a whole time member, per her Linkedin, and became Chairperson at SEBI on March 1st, 2022. Buch remained a 100% shareholder of Agora Partners until March 16th, 2022, per Singaporean records.

Likely realizing the political sensitivity of such a conflict of interest, were it ever revealed, she transferred her stake in Agora Partners to her husband, Dhaval Buch per Singaporean share transfer details.

This offshore Singaporean entity is exempt from disclosing financial statements so it is unclear the amount of revenue it derives from its consulting business and from whom – crucial information for those assessing the probity of the Chairperson's external businesses interests.

This is especially important given the direct email evidence presented earlier showing SEBI's Chairperson, Madhabi Buch, having done business via private email through her husband's name in offshore fund entities.

During Madhabi Buch's tenure as a whole time member at Sebi, her husband was appointed as a senior advisor to Blackstone in 2019

He had not worked for a fund, in real estate or capital markets before, per his LinkedIn

Dhaval Buch, the husband of SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch, describes himself as having "deep experience in procurement and all aspects of the supply chain", per his Linkedin. He spent most of his time at consumer company Unilever, rising to become Chief Procurement Officer, according to his Linkedin.

The same source shows that over the past two decades, he had never worked for a fund, in real estate or at a capital markets firm.

Despite the lack of experience in these areas, he joined Blackstone, a global private equity firm and large investor in India, as a "Senior Advisor" in July 2019, per his Linkedin.

Blackstone has been one of the largest investors and sponsors of REITS, A Nascent Asset Class In India

During Dhaval Buch's Time As Senior Advisor, while his wife was a sebi official, blackstone sponsored mindspace and nexus select trust, india's second and fourth REIT to receive Sebi approval to publicly IPO

Blackstone has been one of the largest investors and sponsors of REITs, a nascent asset class in India.

India's first ever REIT, Embassy, obtained SEBI approval and IPO'ed on April 1st, 2019, sponsored by Blackstone, just 3 months before Dhaval Buch reported joining Blackstone in July 2019.

13 months later, in August 2020, Mindspace REIT, backed by Blackstone, became India's second REIT to IPO, after SEBI approval.

Blackstone now sponsors Nexus Select Trust, described as India's largest retail platform of assets, by ICICI Research, which listed in May, 2023 and became India's fourth publicly traded REIT. Blackstone has multiple other interests across retail estate.

During dhaval buch's time as advisor to blackstone, sebi has proposed, approved and facilitated major REIT regulations changes

These include 7 consultation papers, 3 consolidated updates, 2 new regulatory frameworks and nomination rights for units, specifically benefiting private equity firms like Blackstone

Since Madhabi Buch became Chairperson in March 2022, SEBI has proposed and implemented a raft of REIT legislation, of significant benefit to Blackstone as one of the largest REIT sponsors in India, whom her husband works for.

This has included, among other more procedural updates:

• 7 consultation papers on REITS

• 3 consolidated updates to the "Master Circular" on REITs & 1 amendment

• A new regulatory framework for "Micro, small & medium REITs"

• A new regulatory framework for "offer for sale" of REITs

• New board nomination rights, allowing unit holders like Blackstone to nominate directors

During this time, Blackstone cashed out its entire stake in Embassy REIT, in December 2023 valued at circa INR 71 billion (U.S. $853 million at the time), in India's largest block trade of the year, per media reports.

During industry conferences, Sebi Chairperson Madhabi Buch has touted reits as her "favourite products for the future" and urged investors to look "positively" upon the asset class

While making those statements, she omitted to mention that blackstone, who her husband advises, stands to gain significantly from the asset class

Perhaps the biggest champion of REITs in India is SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch, who has promoted the asset class at various conferences.

On March 20th, 2023, she said REITs are among her "favourite products for the future" at a News18 Rising Bharat Summit.

At a SEBI-NISM research conference a year later, in March 2024, she urged investors to have a "positive" view on REITs, per media reports.

On April 2nd, 2024, at the CII Corporate Governance Summit, the Chairperson predicted enormous growth in REITs, suggesting it would become as large as India's GDP along with InvITs (infrastructure investment trusts) and municipal bonds:

"[REITS, InvITs and municipal bonds] can be in value equal to our entire market the way it is valued today, in others words one time GDP" While making these statements, she failed to disclose the obvious beneficiary of these regulations: the fund her husband advises, Blackstone Madhabi Buch currently has a 99% stake in an indian consulting business called Agora Advisory, where her husband is a director

In 2022, this entity reported $261,000 revenue from consulting, 4.4 times her disclosed salary at Sebi

Agora Advisory Private Limited was set up in India on May 7th, 2013, per its certificate of incorporation. It discloses consultancy as its main business activity.

To date, Madhabi Buch remains a 99% owner of the business with her husband, Dhaval Buch as a director, per its shareholding list and corporate records.

Conclusion: Conflict or capture? Either way, we do not think Sebi can be trusted as an objective arbiter in the adani matter. We think our findings raise questions that merit further investigation. We welcome additional transparency.

To the extent that any proceeds are derived from this report they will be donated to causes that support free expression.

—Hindenburg Research

This story has not been edited by Salar News

LETTERS

Write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Bamboo fences to night vigil: Meghalaya villagers on edge after Bangla unrest

From reinforcing a bamboo fence separating them from Bangladeshis to staying up all night for vigil, residents of a Meghalaya village located metres from the international border are on the edge fearing influx of people from the other side after unrest that overthrew the Sheikh Hasina government.

The 90-odd residents of Lyngkhong village in East Khasi Hills district had erected a rag-tag bamboo fence along the border during the Covid pandemic to prevent petty crimes from across the border.

Lyngkhong is one of several sectors in Meghalaya where border fence could not be constructed due to land demarcation issues and the presence of habitation within 150 yards of the international border pillar or zero line.

A quick tour of the village revealed that most of the houses were located very close to the international border, while the only football ground is situated on the zero line, with children playing under the watchful eyes of the BSF at all times.

Although Lyngkhong has not experienced any serious incident since the fall of the Hasina government on August 5, villagers remain in a state of constant fear.

"On August 5, we were anxious and could not sleep at night fearing our neighbours in Bangladesh might turn violent. Thankfully, the Border Security Force (BSF) increased its vigil, posting more personnel at its Lyngkhong outpost, in addition to the village defence party and the men who stayed up all night to ensure our safety," Deria Khongsdir, a 42-year-old mother of nine, told PTI while recounting her anxiety.

Deria and her younger sister live just a few metres from their Bangladeshi neighbours, with an IB pillar and the bamboo fence, erected by the villagers three years ago, serving as their only protection.

"This bamboo fence is our only protection. It has helped prevent petty crimes at the village level, but we are uncertain if it will be effective in a more serious situation," she said.

Villagers have now added fresh bamboo to the fence to reinforce it. Lyngkhong falls within 150 yards of the zero line and as per norms, a barbed wire fence can be constructed only after 150 yards. So, when foundation was laid for a fence in 2021, it left the village outside of the protection of the fence.

Fierce protests by villagers forced work to halt.

They also erected the bamboo fence at the zero line and urged authorities to erect the barbed wire fence along that line. Negotiations are currently underway between the higher authorities of the two countries to have the barbed wire fence built at the zero line, protecting Lyngkhong, officials said.

Around 80 per cent of the 443 km-long India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya has been fenced, except in areas where Border Guards Bangladesh oppose it or where the terrain is too difficult for construction.

"By convention, the fence should be built at least 150 yards from the zero line, but that's not always the case. BGB sometimes allows fence to be built at the zero line, depending on the presence of habitation, as in Lyngkhong," a senior official of the BSF's Meghalaya Frontier said.

The Government of Bangladesh has agreed to this arrangement in at least seven locations along the border in Meghalaya, and discussions are underway to extend this to Lyngkhong.

However, approval is still pending for at least 13 such areas, and obtaining it is a long and arduous process. "We sent a similar proposal in 2011, but concurrences were only received in 2020 for certain areas," the official said, without providing further details.

Dabling Khongsdir, the matriarch of Lyngkhong and a landowner, expressed deep resentment over the Indian government's handling of the fence issue.

Although there is a BSF outpost in the village, Dabling said "anti-national elements" often take advantage of the porous border, especially at night. Lyngkhong is connected only by border roads. The village lacks electricity, relying on solar power for lighting and wood for cooking. Ramu Khongsdir, Dabling's son and the village headman, expressed concern over Lyngkhong's vulnerable position.

"During unrest in Bangladesh, we cannot sleep peacefully," he said, urging Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma and local MP Ricky Syngkon to consider the villagers' request. "We want the barbed wire fence to come up as soon as possible," he said, noting that even the border roads are under BSF control, limiting their use. *—PTI*

Although Lyngkhong has not experienced any serious incident since the fall of the Hasina government on 5 August, villagers remain in a state of constant fear. Villagers have now added fresh bamboo to the fence to reinforce it
PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Karachi sees 44K street crime cases in first 7 months

KARACHI, 11 AUG

Karachi has witnessed a surge in street crime incidents, with over 44,000 incidents reported from January to July this year, ARY News reported. In just the first seven months of this year, street crime incidents have seen a spark with the majority of crimes involving motorcycle theft in the metropolis, according to the data released by the local police of Karachi. In the period of seven months, more than 31,000 motorcycles were either stolen or snatched from their owners, making them the most common target in these street crime incidents. Meanwhile, over 11,800 cases of mobile phone snatching were recorded, as per the data. Around 1,200 cars were snatched during the same period. *—ANI*

At least 1 person found dead in Baltimore blast

BEL AIR, 11 AUG

At least one person has died after an apparent explosion levelled a house in a town northeast of Baltimore, fire officials said Sunday. Andrew Doyle, a public information officer for Harford County Fire and EMS, confirmed the death in an email. Firefighters were continuing to search the debris for other possible victims of the blast in Bel Air northeast of Baltimore. Firefighters said there is no ongoing threat to the public. *—AP*

5 Chinese firms blacklisted by US over Uyghur issue

WASHINGTON DC, 11 AUG

Aiming to keep goods made with forced labour out of the country's supply chains, the United States banned imports from five more Chinese companies over alleged human rights abuses involving the Uyghurs. As per the United States, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the addition of five entities based in the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) Entity List, bringing the total entities listed to 73. . Fertilizer manufacturer Rare Earth Magnesium Technology Group Holdings and its parent, Century Sunshine Group Holdings, both are based in Hong Kong but stand accused of sourcing tainted inputs from the Xinjiang region of China. The Kashgar Construction Engineering (Group) Co Ltd, Xinjiang Habahe Ashele Copper Co Ltd and Xinjiang Tengxiang Magnesium Products Co Ltd are accused of directly employing the slave labour of Uyghurs. *—ANI*

Taiwan SC upholds officers' spy sentences

TAIPEI, 11 AUG

The Taiwan Supreme Court has upheld the lower court's prison sentences of two retired members of the Taiwan Army, who were found guilty of attempting to collect military intelligence for China. The Supreme Court's ruling was final and the court has agreed with the Taiwan High Court's sentencing of a former staff sergeant surnamed Wu and a former private surnamed Tsou to 22 and 20 months in prison, for violating the Criminal Code of the Armed Forces. It further rejected appeals stating that the previous ruling by the Taiwan High Court Tainan Branch Court did not have any errors. However, there was no direct evidence showing that the information was delivered to Chinese agents. Hence, Wu and Tsou's actions were deemed as attempted offences, according to the court. *—ANI*

Hasina blames US for removal from power

Comments come after India announced to probe possibility of foreign hand behind crisis

Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign and fled to neighboring India on 5 August following weeks of nationwide demonstrations PHOTO: PTI

DHAKA, 11 AUG

Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who is currently taking refuge in India, has accused the US of playing a role in her removal from power as she promised a prompt return to Dhaka.

In a message to party leaders and activists Hasina alleged that foreign powers, particularly the US, played a role in ousting her.

"I resigned, so that I did not have to see the procession of dead bodies. They wanted to come to power over the dead bodies of students, but I did not allow it. I resigned from the premiership. I could have remained in power if I had surrendered the sovereignty of Saint Martin Island and allowed America to hold sway over the Bay of Bengal," she said in a statement, which was first reported by India's English-language daily The Economic Times.

Hasina's comments come shortly after the Indian government announced it would investigate the possibility of a "foreign hand" behind Bangladesh's political crisis.

Hasina was forced to resign and fled to neighboring India on 5 August following weeks of nationwide demonstrations and a deadly crackdown on protesters, which emboldened a student-led movement to oust her regime after 15 years of uninterrupted rule.

—Agencies

Refaat Ahmed is new Bangladesh Chief Justice

DHAKA, 11 AUG

Syed Refaat Ahmed was sworn in as Bangladesh's new Chief Justice on Sunday, a day after Obaidul Hassan stepped down as the top judge following an ultimatum by the protesters demanding a revamp of the judiciary.

Hassan and five other judges of the apex Appellate Division on Saturday tendered their resignation, five days after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime amid massive street protests.

His resignation came as protesters of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement gathered at the apex court premises. The students had issued an ultimatum to him and the judges of the Appellate Division to resign by 1 pm

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath to the chief justice. The oath-taking ceremony was conducted by Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain, the report said.

President Shahabuddin on Saturday appointed Justice Ahmed as the 25th chief justice of Bangladesh.

> **The top priority of new interim govt is to bring the economy back on track. It's not about law and order; opening banks, everything needs to be given equal importance.**
>
> -Salehuddin Ahmed, Bangladesh finance and planning adviser

Several top officials in Bangladesh, including Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Maksud Kamal and Bangla Academy Director General Professor Dr Md Harun-Ur-Rashid Askari, resigned from their posts in the wake of new protests by students and other demonstrators. *—PTI*

Canadians stage a protest to stand in solidarity against the violence against Hindus in Bangladesh in Toronto on Sunday PHOTO: ANI

Protests in UK, Canada, US over violence against Hindus

TORONTO/LONDON/WASHINGTON DC, 11 AUG

Thousands of Canadians staged a protest on Sunday across downtown Toronto to stand in solidarity against the violence against Hindus in Bangladesh, after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation.

People in the protest held in Downtown Toronto were seen chanting, "We want justice - Bangladesh Bangladesh".

A large crowd gathered outside the Houses of Parliament in London on Saturday to protest the alleged violence.

Protesters carried Bangladeshi flags and held posters with messages such as "Protect our temples in Bangladesh," "Hindu lives matter," and "We want justice." Meanwhile, people had protested outside the White House in Washington against alleged violence targeting minority HindusProtesters carried American and Bangladeshi flags and held posters demanding that Bangladeshi minorities be "saved." *—ANI*

UKRAINE STRIKES

Zelenskyy indirectly confirms military incursion in Russia

KYIV, 11 AUG

Days after Ukraine began a surprise military incursion into Russia's Kursk border region, Zelenskyy broke the government's silence on it late Saturday by indirectly acknowledging ongoing military actions to "push the war out into the aggressor's territory" in his nightly address.

Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv City Military Administration said it was the second time this month Kyiv was targeted.

Popko said ballistic missiles did not reach the capital but that suburbs took the hit, while drones aiming for the capital were shot down.

Zelenskyy said that Russia had used a North Korean missile in the strike. Ukraine and the US have previously said that Russia has used North Korean missiles in the war.

Zelenskyy reiterated calls to Western allies to step up in assistance to Ukraine, and that "to really stop Russian terror, we need not only a full-fledged air shield that will protect all our cities and communities, but also strong decisions from partners — decisions that will remove restrictions on our defensive actions." Ukraine's incursion continued for a sixth day on Sunday and is unprecedented for its use of Ukrainian military units on Russian soil. The exact aims of the operation remain unclear and Ukrainian military officials have adopted a policy of secrecy, presumably to ensure its success.

—AP

PHOTO: X/@ZELENSKYY

Dad and son die in Russian missile attack

Two people were killed, including a four-year old boy, in a Russian drone and missile barrage on the Kyiv region overnight into Sunday, while in Russia the regional governor of Kursk said 13 people were wounded when a Ukrainian missile shot down by Russian air defences fell on a residential building. *—AP*

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump gestures after speaking at a campaign rally in Bozeman, Montana PHOTO: PTI

Trump's campaign claims mails were hacked, blames Iran

WASHINGTON, 11 AUG

Former President Donald Trump's presidential campaign said on Saturday that it has been hacked and suggested Iranian actors were involved in stealing and distributing sensitive internal documents.

The campaign provided no specific evidence of Iran's involvement, but the claim comes a day after Microsoft issued a report detailing foreign agents' attempts to interfere in the US campaign in 2024. Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung blamed the hack on "foreign sources hostile to the United States." A spokesperson for the National Security Council said that it takes any report of improper foreign interference "extremely seriously" and condemns any government or entity that attempts to undermine confidence in US democratic institutions, but said it deferred to the Justice Department on this matter. Iran's mission to the United Nations, when asked about the claim of the Trump campaign, denied being involved. "We do not accord any credence to such reports," the mission said. "The Iranian government neither possesses nor harbors any intent or motive to interfere in the United States presidential election."

Iran long has been suspected of running hacking campaigns targeting its enemies in the Middle East and beyond. Tehran also long has threatened to retaliate against Trump over the 2020 drone strike he ordered that killed prominent Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani. *—AP*

Kamala ahead of Trump in 3 states, claims Polls

WASHINGTON DC, 11 AUG

US Vice President Kamala Harris has been leading former US President Donald Trump by four points each in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin among likely voters, according to the new polls conducted by The New York Times and Siena College.

Kamala Harris has transformed the 2024 presidential elections as it shows a major shift from previous Times/Siena polls, which found Trump leading Harris and President Joe Biden by an average of one or two points each across the same three states.

Until now, the basic dynamic of the race was driven by US President Biden's unpopularity. It prevented Democrats from running their usual strategy against Trump and his MAGA allies, making an election a referendum on Trump by running a broadly acceptable candidate.

In the poll, at least 49 per cent of likely voters in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin highlight that they have a favourable view of her, a level neither Harris nor Biden obtained in any previous Times/Siena poll this cycle, The New York Times reported.

However, a majority doesn't think she's too far to the left, either, only 44 per cent of likely voters say she's too liberal or progressive, compared with 44 per cent who say she's not too far either way and another 6 per cent who say she isn't progressive enough, as reported by The News York Times. *—ANI*

Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris speaks at a campaign rally at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas PHOTO: PTI

Israel broadens evacuation orders after strike on Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, 11 AUG

The Israeli military ordered more evacuations in southern Gaza early Sunday after a deadly airstrike on a school-turned-shelter in the north killed at least 80 Palestinians, according to local health authorities. Israel said it targeted a militant command post, killing at least 19 fighters.

Israel has repeatedly ordered mass evacuations as its troops have returned to heavily destroyed areas where they had previously battled Palestinian militants. The vast majority of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people have been displaced by the 10-month old war, often multiple times.

Hundreds of thousands have crammed into squalid tent camps with few public services or sought shelter in schools like the one struck on Saturday. Palestinians say nowhere in the besieged territory feels safe.

The latest evacuation orders apply to areas in Khan Younis, including part of an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone from which the military said rockets had been fired. Khan Younis, suffered widespread destruction during an air and ground offensive earlier this year. Tens of thousands fled again last week after an earlier evacuation order. *—AP*

ISRAEL CONFIRMS KILLING 19 TERRORISTS

JERUSALEM, 11 AUG

An Israeli airstrike killed 19 terrorists in a Hamas command centre inside a mosque located in a Gaza City school compound the Israel Defense Forces said on Saturday night. The 19 terrorists confirmed killed were affiliated with Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

"The Hamas terrorist organisation systematically violates international law and operates from within civilian infrastructure and shelters, brutally exploiting the civilian population and institutions as human shields for their terror activities," the IDF said.

"The strike was carried out using three precise munitions, which, cannot cause the amount of damage that is being reported by the Hamas-run Government Information Office in Gaza. Furthermore, no severe damage was caused to the compound where the terrorists were situated," the army said.

—ANI

TURKEY RESTORES ACCESS TO INSTAGRAM AFTER ONE WEEK

ISTANBUL, 11 AUG

Turkey reinstated access to Instagram on Saturday night, after more than a week of being blocked nationwide.

The Information and Communication Technologies Authority barred access to Instagram on 2 August without providing a specific reason. Government officials later said the ban was imposed because Xfailed to abide by Turkish laws.

"In our talks with Instagram officials, we were assured our requests would be met, especially those regarding criminal activity, and given a promise that we would work together on a means of censoring users," Abdulkadir Uraloglu, Turkey's transportation and infrastructure minister wrote on X on Saturday. Uraloglu elaborated saying that the platform "was to establish compliance with Turkish law and that in instances where the law was violated, there would be quick and effective intervention." *—AP*

IN WAKE OF RIOTS

UK schoolchildren to be trained in spotting fake news

LONDON, 11 AUG

Schoolchildren will be taught how to spot extremist content and fake news online under proposed changes to the curriculum in the wake of far-right riots across UK cities fuelled by misinformation on social media.

UK Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said on Sunday that she is launching a review of the curriculum in both primary and secondary schools to embed critical thinking across multiple subjects and arm children against "putrid conspiracy theories". It means schoolchildren may analyse articles in English lessons to help learn how to weed out fabricated clickbait from accurate reporting.

The riots in UK began in Southport, the scene of the fatal stabbings in north-west England of three young girls at a holiday dance workshop on 29 July, after false claims over the UK-born teenage male suspect being a Muslim refugee who arrived illegally into the country. *—AP*

The riots in UK began in Southport, the scene of the fatal stabbings of three young girls at a holiday dance workshop on 29 July PHOTO: ANI

Infant succumbs to Polio in Pak, total cases rise to 14

ISLAMABAD, 11 AUG

Pakistan continues to grapple with cases of polio with the country along with neighbouring Afghanistan being the only two countries in the world where the poliovirus is still an endemic.

On 10 August, the 14th polio case of the year was reported from Qilla Saifullah district of Balochistan boosting the number of poliovirus cases in the country to 13 for the year 2024.

The country has reported three more cases- two in Balochistan and one in Punjab province.

Since 2015, Pakistan has reported a total of 362 polio cases, as per a report in Al Jazeera. However, despite administering more than 300 million doses of oral vaccine annually with the help of at least 350,000 vaccinators and an expenditure of over USD 9.3 bn from 2013 to 2023, the country has been unable to eradicate polio, the Qatar-based publication said.

The highly infectious Polio disease has no or mild symptoms and can cause paralysis of the limbs. Polio is transmitted through contaminated water or food, or contact with an infected person. Treatment includes bed rest, pain relievers, rehabilitation and portable ventilators. *—ANI*

Global demand muted in domestic market: TataMotors

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Tata Motors expects demand to remain sluggish in overseas markets this fiscal while pinning hopes on a gradual bounce back in the domestic market on the back of new launches and the upcoming festive season. Earlier this month, the Mumbai-based automaker reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,566 crore and total income of Rs 1,09,623 crore for June quarter. "Overall, from a demand perspective, we do anticipate that as far as the global demand is concerned, it is likely to remain muted. It has been that way. It's likely to remain muted. No immediate changes there," Tata Motors Global CFO PB Balaji said in an analyst call. In the domestic market, the company expects a gradual improvement in demand during the rest of the year aided by government plans to invest on infrastructure, healthy monsoons, favourable overall economic macros, new launches and upcoming festive period, he noted. —*PTI*

LIC to invest around Rs 1.30 lakh cr in FY25

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) MD and CEO Siddhartha Mohanty has said that the corporation is looking to make fresh investments of around Rs 1.30 lakh crore in equities during the current financial year. During April-June FY25, the insurance behemoth made an investment of about Rs 38,000 crore in shares as against Rs 23,300 crore in the same period a year ago. LIC earned a profit of Rs 15,500 crore from its investments in equity markets during the first quarter. The profit from its investment was higher by 13.5 per cent quarter-on-quarter. "We are surely looking at the markets and price movements... we are looking to invest a good amount at least whatever we had invested in last financial year...LIC made an investment of around Rs 1.32 lakh crore in FY'24," he said. —*PTI*

OYO raises ₹ 1,457 cr in latest funding round

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Oravel Stays Ltd, the parent company of OYO, has raised Rs 1,457 crore from a consortium of investors in the latest funding round, sources said. The IPO-bound unicorn has raised nearly Rs 1,040 crore in the Series G funding round. This follows an earlier raise of Rs 416.85 crore in the same series and concludes the round. According to different documents accessed by PTI, the additional equity issuance was approved by 99.99 per cent shareholders in an EGM held on August 8. The capital will be used to support OYO's growth and its global expansion plans, sources said. The additional fund raise values the company at the same valuation of USD 2.4 billion, as the first Series G tranche issued to InCred in July, a source said. The investment is being made through Compulsory Convertible Cumulative Preference Shares, each priced at Rs 29, consistent with the valuation of the recent raise in Series G.—*PTI*

Lamborghini bets big on India's long-term potential

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Italian super luxury automaker Automobili Lamborghini expects exponential growth in India with the potential to become a top market in the Asia Pacific region in the long-term, driven by customers who are the youngest globally, according to a senior company official. With the company selling a record 103 units in India in 2023, Automobili Lamborghini Asia Pacific Region Director, Francesco Scardaoni said his wish is to cross the annual sales mark of 150 units in the country in 2026. "In terms of volume, India is number 14th in the world and number sixth in Asia Pacific. In terms of percentage it is the fastest growing market," Scardaoni told PTI. —*PTI*

Sebi proposed F&O norms to hit exchanges, brokers: Report

According to reports the market may slump by 30-40%

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Stock exchanges and brokers, catering to retail traders, could be hit hard by the regulator Sebi's proposed measures for Futures & Options (F&O) trading regulations, with market volumes slumping 30-40 per cent, according to reports.

If these measures are implemented, the number of investors could decrease, it added.

Moreover, discount brokers, who depend heavily on retail investors, are expected to be more affected than traditional full-service brokers.

Sebi, in its consultation paper in July, proposed seven measures, including increasing minimum contract size and upfront collection of option premiums, intra-day monitoring of position limits, rationalisation of strike prices, removal of calendar spread benefit on expiry day and increase in near contract expiry margin.

Sebi stated that these measures are aimed at enhancing investor protection and promote market stability in derivative markets.

According to a report by Jefferies, Sebi's proposed measures to reduce the number of weekly option contracts from 18 to 6 could impact around 35 per cent of industry premiums. However, if trading shifts to the remaining contracts, the overall impact can be reduced to 20-25 per cent.

Discount brokers, who depend heavily on retail investors, are expected to be more affected

PHOTO: PTI

- Stock exchanges and brokers, catering to retail traders, could be hit hard by the regulator Sebi's proposed measures for Futures & Options (F&O) trading regulations, with market volumes slumping 30-40 per cent, according to reports.

Among its 7 proposed measures, IIFL Securities see the highest impact from the withdrawal of weekly options (only 1 per exchange allowed) as index Options account for 98 per cent of the volumes.

IIFL Securities expects the National Stock Exchange (NSE) to be more affected than the BSE because 60 per cent of NSE's revenue comes from options trading, compared to 40 per cent for BSE. It estimates that by the financial year 2026, NSE's earnings could be reduced by 25-30 per cent while BSE's earnings could drop by 15-18 per cent.

Jefferies also believes that removal of Bankex weekly contract can impact BSE's earnings per share (EPS) by 7-9 per cent over FY25-27. It further said that BSE might see a small decline in earnings, but if trading activity shifts from discontinued products, it could offset the impact or even lead to earnings growth.

Jefferies believes that clearing members like Nuvama, which caters to institutional players High-Frequency Traders (HFTs) and Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) are less impacted. Even if "Bankex" contributes 30 per cent by FY26, the impact on BSE's volumes is expected to be smaller compared to NSE, it said.

Sebi Chief Madhabi Puri Buch recently mentioned that households are losing up to Rs 60,000 crore a year in the problematic futures and options segment. —*PTI*

IN JUNE

Focused MFs' asset base rises 31% to ₹1.43L cr

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Focused mutual funds, which invest in a concentrated portfolio of stocks, are gaining traction among investors with the asset base of the category growing to Rs 1.43 lakh crore in three months ended June 2024, marking an increase of 31 per cent from a year ago.

Interestingly, some of the focused funds offered by the mutual fund houses such as Invesco India Focused Fund, Mahindra Manulife Focused Fund, JM Focused Fund and HDFC Focused 30 Fund delivered a remarkable return of 40-60 per cent in the past year, industry data showed.

Focused funds are a type of mutual fund where the fund manager selects a concentrated portfolio of stocks, typically limited to a maximum of 30 due to regulatory constraints.

This requires the fund manager to be highly skilled in stock selection, as they need to identify the best investment opportunities across the market without bias toward any specific market cap or sector.

According to data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi), the assets under management (AUM) of the focused funds were at Rs 1.43 lakh crore in June quarter 2024-25 as compared to Rs 1.09 lakh crore in April-June FY24.

PHOTO: PTI

Focused funds follow a similar concentrated portfolio strategy where the fund manager picks the top stocks and offers flexibility across market caps.

Overall, there are 31 focused schemes offered by different mutual fund houses in the category.

These schemes have given returns of 19-60 per cent in the last one year. With a corpus of Rs 1,552 crore as of June 2024, Mahindra Manulife Focused Fund has consistently performed well, securing the second rank for 1, 2, and 3-year periods. —*PTI*

FPIs offload ₹13,400cr in Indian equities after 2 months

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

After infusing money during the last two months, foreign investors have turned net sellers as they pulled out over Rs 13,400 crore from Indian equities in August so far due to unwinding of the yen carry trade and recession fears in the US.

So far this year, FPIs have made a net investment of Rs 22,134 crore in equities, data with the depositories showed.

Going forward, if the market continues to rise, FPIs are likely to press more sales since Indian stock valuations continue to remain elevated, particularly in relation to valuations in other markets, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

According to the data, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) withdrew a net amount of Rs 13,431 crore from equities so far this month (1-9 August). This came following an inflow of Rs 32,365 crore in July on expectation of sustained economic growth, continued reforms and better-than-expected earnings season, and Rs 26,565 crore in June driven by political stability and the sharp rebound in markets.

PHOTO: PTI

The latest outflow was triggered by the unwinding of the yen carry trade after the Bank of Japan raised interest rates to 0.25 per cent and recession fears in the US, Vijayakumar said.

This was further exacerbated by escalating geopolitical tensions, particularly the intensifying conflict between Israel and Iran, which led investors to reduce their risk exposure, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. —*PTI*

MORTH REPORT REVEALS

'FINANCIAL STRAIN OF DISABILITY IN INDIA HIGH'

KOLKATA, 11 AUG

A staggering number of Indians face financial hardship due to disability, with lakhs suffering temporary or permanent limitations each year and recognising this critical gap in financial security, insurance companies are stepping forward with innovative solutions, officials said on Sunday.

A 2018 report by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) revealed that India, despite having only 1 per cent of the world's vehicles, accounts for 6 per cent of all road crashes.

According to experts, close to 5 to 7 lakh people in the country suffer from temporary or permanent disability each year due to the high rates of accidents and crippling diseases and lose their ability to work and earn a livelihood.

"The onset of disability often brings substantial healthcare expenses, making comprehensive insurance coverage crucial to prevent social and financial decline," Future Generali India Insurance, Chief Distribution Officer, Ramit Goyal said.

A study titled 'Measuring the financial impact of disabilities in India' available on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) website, suggests around one-fifth (20.32 per cent) of the household's monthly consumption expenditure was spent on out-of-pocket expenses for disability.

More than half (57.1 per cent) of the households were pushed to catastrophic health expenditure due to one of the members being disabled.

Almost one-fifth (19.1 per cent) of the households that were above the poverty line before one of the members was treated for disability were pushed below the poverty line. —*PTI*

According to experts, close to 5 to 7 lakh people in the country suffer from temporary or permanent disability each year PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Reliance to commission 1st solar giga-factory in FY25

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, plans to commission its first solar giga-factory in the current fiscal as it pivots a green pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions from operations by 2035.

In its largest annual report, the firm said it is targeting to commission the first train of 20GW solar PV (photovoltaic) manufacturing by the end of 2024-25 fiscal (April 2024 to March 2025) and scale up to 20GW in a phased manner over 2026. The solar giga factory will include manufacturing of PV modules, cells, wafers and ingots, polysilicon, and glass at a single location.

It is also targeting industrialising sodium-ion cell production at the MW level in 2025 and first 50 MWh a year lithium battery cells pilot in 2026. Reliance had in 2021 announced plans to invest USD 10 billion over three years to develop a new fuels business based on 100 GW of renewable power capacity by 2030.

The plan involves setting up four giga factories for manufacturing renewables equipment, battery storage, fuel cells and hydrogen at Jamnagar in Gujarat. —*PTI*

- Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, plans to commission its first solar giga-factory in the current fiscal as it pivots a green pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions from operations by 2035.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 most valued firms erodes by ₹ 1.66L crore

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 1,66,954.07 crore last week, with Reliance Industries and Life Insurance Corporation of India emerging as the biggest laggards, in line with weak trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark slumped 1,276.04 points or 1.57 per cent. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Reliance Industries tanked Rs 33,930.56 crore to Rs 19,94,765.01 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) slumped Rs 30,676.24 crore to Rs 7,17,001.74 crore. State Bank of India lost Rs 21,151.33 crore from its valuation which stood at Rs 7,35,566.52 crore.

PHOTO: PTI

The market valuation of Infosys dived Rs 20,973.19 crore to Rs 7,35,277.28 crore and that of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) tumbled Rs 19,157.77 crore to Rs 15,30,469.11 crore.

The valuation of HDFC Bank declined by Rs 7,095.87 crore to Rs 12,56,505.53 crore. However, the mcap of Hindustan Unilever jumped Rs 12,946.24 crore to reach Rs 6,45,808.65 crore. The valuation of ITC climbed Rs 8,406.26 crore to Rs 6,19,829.37 crore.

Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC. —*PTI*

IIM-K to host 'Coop Pitch' for youth entrepreneurship

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

The Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIM-K) will host 'Coop Pitch 2024', a competition aimed at promoting cooperative entrepreneurship among youth, from October 16-18, 2024.

Organised by ICA Domus Trust (IDT) and Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS) Limited, the event is part of ULCCS' centenary celebrations.

The competition will focus on five key areas: agri-tech and safe food, care economy and social sector, platform cooperatives, sustainability and green economy, and education and skills, an official statement said.

Participants will engage in hands-on activities guided by experts in cooperative business models.

The top three teams will receive cash prizes totalling Rs 1,00,000, with the first prize being Rs 50,000, second Rs 30,000, and third Rs 20,000, the statement added.

Winners will also benefit from a year-long mentorship program to help develop their cooperative enterprises. —*PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

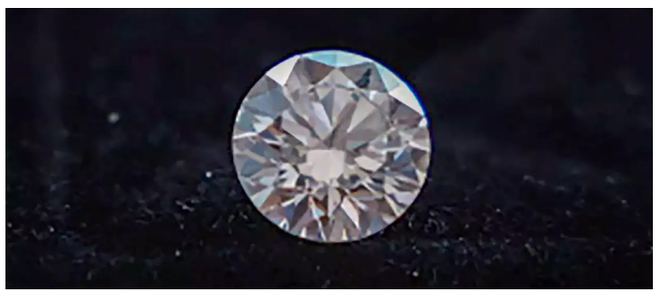
FALLING PRICES, IMPORTS

Lab-grown diamond sectors face major issues

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Significant fall in prices, eroding consumer interest and competition with imports are some of the major challenges being faced by the domestic lab-grown diamond industry, think tank GTRI said on Sunday.

It also said that while India faces the issue of production overcapacity, it continues to import lab-grown diamonds in large amounts and this issue needs deeper investigation. To address these challenges, the government needs to take certain steps such as setting clear and consistent rules to standardize quality, certification, and market practices; issuing a Quality Control Order to check quality of imports; and investment in research and development to improve production processes, reduce costs, and enhance the quality of lab-grown diamonds.



Prices of lab-grown diamond fall by 65 per cent in the past year PHOTO: PTI

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that India's lab-grown diamond industry is facing a major challenge, with prices falling by 65 per cent in the past year, from Rs 60,000 to Rs 20,000 per carat due to local overproduction and oversupply from abroad.

This sharp decline points to problems like overproduction, high imports, and lack of regulation, which are hurting consumer confidence. Urgent corrective steps are needed to get this high-growth industry back on track, it added.

Meanwhile, natural diamonds cost around Rs 3.5 lakh per carat and this price drop is making it difficult for manufacturers to repay loans taken for purchasing lab-grown diamond making machines, putting them under financial strain, it said. These diamonds are chemically, physically, and optically identical to natural diamonds. Natural diamonds come in various shapes, while lab-grown diamonds are usually square or rectangular. Lab-grown diamonds are produced in a rough form and need to be cut and polished, just like natural diamonds. —*PTI*

Steel prices trade at 3-year lows on increased supplies

NEW DELHI, 11 AUG

Domestic steel prices have dropped to a three-year low on account of increased imports, according to a report.

Hot rolled coils (HRC) prices have fallen to Rs 51,000 a tonne from a peak of Rs 76,000 a tonne in April 2022, markets research firm BigMint said in a report. The rate of cold rolled coils (CRC) is trading at Rs 58,200 a tonne from the peak of Rs 86,300 a tonne in April 2022. The prices exclude the 18 per cent GST on the commodity.

"The rates of HRC and CRC in India are trading at their three-year low graph. The surge in imports has impacted the domestic prices hitting the demand," BigMint said.

According to the data, imports during the April-June quarter surged by 68 per cent to 1.93 million tonnes (MT) from 1.15 MT in the same period of 2023-24.

PHOTO: PTI

Steel imports rose by 38 per cent to 8.319 MT in 2023-24, making India a net importer of the commodity. Steel players have raised the issue of increased imports from select countries with the government and sought measures to protect the domestic industry from rising shipments. —*PTI*

HASSAN WINS MARATHON GOLD

Hassan finished the baseline with a record time of 2.22.55; this is her 3rd medal

Sifan Hassan posses for a photograph *PHOTO:X/@WORLDATHLETICS*

PARIS, 11 AUG

Sifan Hassan traded elbows with Tigst Assefa with 150 meters left in the women's marathon, then passed her along the railing to win the race for her third distance medal of the Paris Games on Sunday.

Hassan finished in an Olympic record time of 2 hours, 22 minutes, 55 seconds. She also won bronze in the 5,000 and 10,000. By simply completing the marathon, she ran more than 62 kilometres.

She now has six Olympic medals. In Tokyo, Hassan won the 5,000 and 10,000 and finished third in the 1,500. Assefa got silver, and Kenya's Hellen Obiri took the bronze. Breaking tradition, the women's Olympic marathon was held on the final day instead of the men's race.

Hassan, an Ethiopian-born racer who runs for the Netherlands, used the same tactic in the hilly, 26.2-mile course as on the oval.

She lingered behind the leaders for most of the race before summoning up the energy for a late-race kick that would go down as one of the best the sport has seen.

This one, amazingly, had more the look of a crowded race on the oval down the stretch.

As Hassan gathered to make her last pass, Assefa, from Ethiopia, tried to block her path. Hassan moved to the inside around a bend.

Assefa tried to squeeze her against the barrier separating the course from the cheering fans. The runners traded elbows, and then, Hassan took off past Assefa and sprinted in for the win. *—AP*

MEDAL TALLY

COUNTRIES	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
5. FRANCE	16	26	22	64
6. NETHERLANDS	15	7	12	34
7. GREAT BRITAIN	14	22	29	65
8. S KOREA	13	9	10	32
9. ITALY	12	13	15	40
10. GERMANY	12	13	8	33
11. NEW ZEALAND	10	7	3	20
12. CANADA	9	7	11	27
13. UZBEKISTAN	8	2	3	13
14. HUNGARY	6	7	6	19
15. SPAIN	5	4	9	18
16. SWEDEN	4	4	3	11
17. KENYA	4	2	5	11
18. NORWAY	4	1	3	8
19. IRELAND	4	0	3	7
20. BRAZIL	3	7	10	20
21. IRAN	3	6	3	12
22. UKRAINE	3	5	4	12
23. ROMANIA	3	4	2	9
24. GEORGIA	3	3	1	7
25. BELGIUM	3	1	6	10
26. BULGARIA	3	1	3	7
27. SERBIA	3	1	1	5
28. CZECHIA	3	0	2	5
29. DENMARK	2	2	5	9
30. AZERBAIJAN	2	2	3	7

Khelif files harassment case after gender row

PARIS, 11 AUG

PHOTO:X

Imane Khelif, the Algerian boxer at the centre of a gender dispute at the Paris Olympic Games, has filed a legal complaint against the social media platform X for harassment.

The gold medal winner's lawyer said on Saturday that she filed the formal complaint in France. Khelif and another gold medallist, Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting, have been at the centre of a high-profile dispute over gender identity that has provoked heated debate on social media.

Citing court documents, the French newspaper Le Monde reported that the boxing champion "filed a complaint against X" with the Paris correctional court, the national centre for combating online harassment. Khelif's lawyer Nabil Boudi said the complaint was filed on Friday. "The boxer Imane Khelif has decided to begin a new fight, a fight for justice, dignity and honour," he said in a statement as he announced the complaint for "aggravated online harassment … [had been filed] to Paris prosecutors".

"All that is being said about me on social media is immoral. I want to change the minds of people around the world," Khelif said. *—Al Jazeera*

Abinav Bindra awarded with Olympic Order at IOC Session

PARIS, 11 AUG

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach and IOC Athletes' Commission vice chair Abhinav Bindra *PHOTO: X/@YASHODHARARAJE*

Indian shooting icon Abhinav Bindra was awarded the prestigious Olympic Order in recognition of his "distinguished contribution" to the Olympic movement.

Bindra, who became India's first-ever Olympic individual gold medallist in the 2008 Beijing Games with is top finish in 10m air rifle event, was conferred with the honour by the International Olympic Committee during its 142nd Session here on Saturday.

"When I was a young boy, it was these Olympic rings, which gave meaning to my life," Bindra said. "And it was a privilege to be able to pursue my Olympic dream for over two decades. Post my athletic career, it has been a great passion of mine to try and contribute back to the Olympic Movement. It has been a privilege and an honour," he added.

The 41-year-old, who is also the vice chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission, said the award will inspire him to continue to work even harder and keep contributing to the Olympic Movement. The Olympic Order, established in 1975, is the highest award of the Olympic Movement. It is awarded to individuals for their distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement.

Bindra appeared at the Summer Games in five editions, beginning at Sydney 2000. He made his mark for the first time at Athens 2004 when he made it to the final of the men's 10m air rifle. At Beijing 2008, he beat defending champion Zhu Qinan of China to win the gold medal. He also made the final at Rio 2016, but finished fourth. *—PTI*

Positive thing: Ponting on cricket's return in Olympics

DUBAI, 11 AUG

World Cup winning former Australian captain Ricky Ponting feels that cricket's return in Los Angeles edition of the Olympics in four years' time will be a big positive for the game. It will be a part of the two-week-long extravaganza during the 2028 Games set to be held in Los Angeles, which will witness the sport's return to the stage after 128 years. The only time cricket featured in the Olympics was in 1900 with two teams -- Great Britain and France -- with the former winning the gold medal. It was last October when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) officially confirmed the sport's presence in the Games during the 141st IOC Session in Mumbai. *—PTI*

PHOTO:X@SPORTBLADET

SPRINTER MULAMBA TESTS POSITIVE FOR STEROIDS AT OLYMPICS

PARIS, 11 AUG

Sprinter Dominique Lasconi Mulamba, listed as one of Congo's flag bearers for the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, has tested positive for an anabolic steroid, the International Testing Agency said Sunday. Mulamba, who competed in the 100 meters, gave a sample that was positive for stanozolol metabolite, the ITA said. He has been provisionally suspended and cannot participate in Sunday's closing ceremony. *—AP*

MAN CLIMBS EIFFEL TOWER BEFORE OLYMPICS CLOSING CEREMONY

PARIS, 11 AUG

PHOTO:PTI

French police have evacuated the area around the Eiffel Tower after a man was seen climbing the Paris landmark hours before the Olympics closing ceremony on Sunday. The shirtless man was seen scaling the 330-metre (1,083-foot) tall tower in the afternoon. It's unclear where he began his ascent, but he was spotted just above the Olympic rings adorning the second section of the monument, just above the first viewing deck. Police escorted visitors away from the area around 3pm. Some visitors who were briefly locked on the second floor were allowed to exit around 30 minutes later. The incident occurred as the Olympic competition winds down and security services in Paris and beyond are shifting their focus to the closing ceremony that will bring the curtain down on the Games. More than 30,000 police officers have been deployed around Paris on Sunday. *—AP*

IT'S TIME TO BID ADIEU

PR SREEJESH

Sreejesh announced retirement from Indian hockey after winning Bronze. Besides the two Olympic bronze medals, he has 2 Asian Games Gold, 2 Commonwealth Games Gold, and 4 Asian Champions Trophy Gold medals.

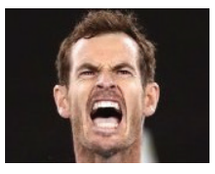
ROHAN BOPANNA

After an early exit at the Games, Bopanna from Bengaluru confirmed his retirement from Indian tennis, thus ruling himself out from 2026 Asian Games in Japan. At 44, Bopanna was there in the world No. 1 position in men's tennis for some time.

ASHWINI PONNAPPA

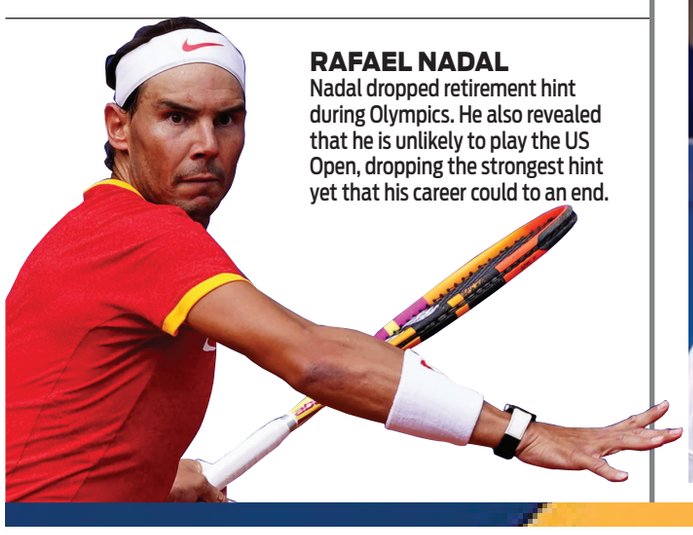
Ponnappa announced her retirement from the Olympics after a loss in their Group C badminton women's team match. She is a two time sub-junior national champion and two time junior national champion in women's doubles.

ANDY MURRAY



Andy Murray happily retired 'on own terms' after tennis career ended at Olympics. The British legend in an interview said 'It just felt right' just after he lost a match.

RAFAEL NADAL



Nadal dropped retirement hint during Olympics. He also revealed that he is unlikely to play the US Open, dropping the strongest hint yet that his career could to an end.

DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

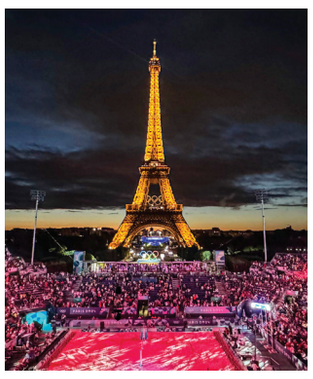
NOVAK DJOKOVIC
The 38-year-old set a record of being the oldest man to win the men's singles Gold medal after beating recent Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz. With this victory, he completed the Career Golden Slam, a feat achieved by winning all four Grand Slam tournaments and an Olympic gold medal. Djokovic alias Djoker had previously failed to win an Olympic gold medal in Rio 2016.

ARSHAD NADEEM
Nadeem's 92.97-meter (305-feet) javelin throw Thursday at the Paris Games set an Olympic record. It ended Pakistan's 40-year-long wait for a gold medal at the global sports.

LEON MARCHAND
Leon Marchand has now done what only three Olympic swimmers before him ever have: win four individual gold medals at single Games.

IMANE KHELIF
Imane Khelif, the Algerian boxer who became the focal point of a gender eligibility debate at the Paris Olympics, secured the gold medal in the women's 145-pound division Friday afternoon, earning her country's first gold in boxing.

MIJAIN LOPEZ
Cuba's legendary wrestler Mijain Lopez is retiring at the pinnacle of his career, where he's remained for 16 years. Lopez has personified greatness in wrestling as he is the only athlete to win 5 gold medals in 5 separate Games in his event.



MANIKA BATRA
Manika Batra made history as the first Indian table tennis player to advance to the Olympic Games singles round of 16 by defeating Prithika Pavade 4-0.

NADIA BATTOCLETTI
For three straight Olympics, nobody born outside of Africa had even come close to finishing on the podium in the women's 10,000 meters. Italy's Nadia Battocletti ended that streak and claimed Silver.

SUDAN REFUGEE ATHLETE PARTICIPATES
21-year-old South Sudanese runner Perina Lokure Nakang is competing in the Paris Olympics, among many of the 37 athletes on the Olympic refugee team

FREE AFGHAN WOMEN
Refugee breaker Manizha Talash, or "b-girl Talash," was disqualified from the first ever Olympic breaking competition on Friday after she wore a cape that said "Free Afghan Women" during her pre-qualifier battle against India Sardjoe — known as "b-girl India."

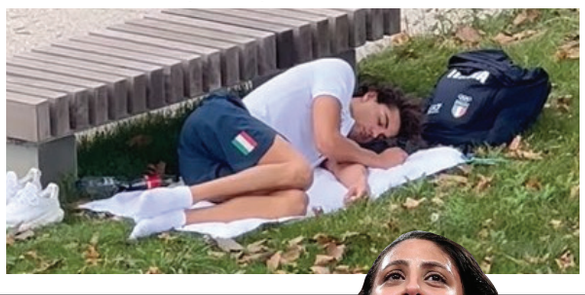
SEINE RIVER CONTROVERSY
Number of athletes fell ill after swimming in the river. A Belgian triathlete withdraw from a mixed relay event. According to some reports, bacteria levels in the long-polluted river have been in flux during the Games.

BREAKING
From the Australian b-girl with the meme-worthy "kangaroo" dance move to the silver-medal winning Lithuanian in a durag, breaking's Olympic debut had a few moments that raised questions from viewers about whether the essence of the hip-hop art form was captured at the Paris.

VIRAL MOMENTS

YUSUF DIKEC
With one hand in his pocket and wearing standard glasses, Dikec from Turkey clinched a Bronze medal in 10m air pistol mixed team event. His casual look and lack of professional equipment have been the talk of social media, but it would be unwise to underestimate his quality on this basis.

GOLD MEDALLIST SLEEPS IN THE PARK
Italian swimmer Thomas Ceccon, gold medalist in the men's 100-meter backstroke, has gone viral after being seen sleeping in a park outside. According to some reports bad accommodation forced Ceccon to sleep at the park



PREGNANT OLYMPIAN BREAKS THE TABOO
Seven months pregnant Egyptian fencer Nada Hafez revealed she was "carrying a little Olympian" when competing against USA's Elizabeth.

LOVE IN PARIS

The Paris Olympics will be remembered not only for its remarkable athletic performances but also for the numerous marriage proposals that took place. Surprisingly, many athletes seized the moment to propose to their partners amidst their quest for sporting glory.

French athlete Alice Finot proposed marriage to her boyfriend Bruno Martínez Bargiela.

PHOTO: X@NOSYBUZZER

PHOTO: X

Mondo Duplantis kissed girlfriend Desiré Inglander after setting pole vault record in epic Olympics scene.

Liu Yuchen proposed to his girlfriend Huang Ya Qiong, after she secured a Gold medal in the Badminton mixed doubles final.

PHOTO: X@POPBASE